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2002 DREISER ESSAY PRIZE WINNER

Dreiser's Universe of Imbalance in *Sister Carrie*

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Dreiser is not typically remembered for his mellifluous prose style. Astonished by the author's formal shortcomings, F. R. Leavis famously remarked that Dreiser wrote as if he had no "native language" (Markels 505). Even Dreiser's proponents find themselves apologizing for his woeful style. In the introduction to the 1957 edition of *Sister Carrie*, Kenneth S. Lynn admits, "Dreiser was the helpless (because unwitting) prisoner of a trite and obvious language" (499). Contemporary critics have made similar confessions concerning Dreiser's "thick prose" and "antistylism" (Markels 506; Pizer, "Nineteenth" 543). Yet perhaps most notable is Saul Bellow's flat assertion that Dreiser's works constitute "bad writing," and that his "novels are best read quickly" (qtd. in Moers 520).

Given his reputation as a bad writer, critics often abandon analyses of Dreiser's form in favor of interpretations of his content based on the cultural studies mainstays of race, class, and gender. Although many of their insights are certainly astute, their lack of close reading creates the need for supplemental discussions of Dreiser's artistry. Take, for example, Walter Benn Michaels's "*Sister Carrie*'s Popular Economy," in which Michaels initially contends that imbalance permeates *Sister Carrie*, as characters are driven by unchecked desires for fame, youth, and, particularly, wealth. Money is that which we want but do not have, leading to the establishment of "a principle of discrepancy, an imbalance built into the very possibility of definition" (34). Michaels therefore suggests that imbalance stems from desire, which itself stems from capitalism, characterized as "the 'unequal exchange' between capitalist and laborer" (33). More importantly, Michaels proffers that Dreiser, despite his overt condemnation of capitalism, unwit-

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tingly embraces this unequal exchange. Therefore, *Sister Carrie* actually presents Dreiser's "unabashed and extraordinarily literal acceptance of the economy that produced those conditions" (35).

Michaels's article is spot on in many respects. Denying the forces of economics in *Sister Carrie* is difficult, especially in light of Carrie's understanding of money as " 'something everybody else has and I must get' " (48). Yet a closer reading of Dreiser's form reveals that his embracing of imbalance stems not solely from capitalism but rather from a philosophical subscription to cosmic imbalance. Therefore, even though Michaels is correct to unearth the novel's implicit capitalist ideology, his reading is better employed as a useful entry point for the elucidation of a more pervasive ideology of imbalance.

Lee Clark Mitchell articulates the likely source of this imbalance in his excellent formalist treatment of naturalist writing, *Determined Fictions*. Mitchell initially recalls the critical consensus that naturalist style "falls woefully short of the standards deemed appropriate for art" (vii). Yet he turns this judgment on its head when shrewdly suggesting that "the 'power' of naturalism is established through a perspective that thoroughly unsettles our views" (xi). This perspective is a "necessitarian vision": a determinist mode of life largely based on the theories of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. As Mitchell observes, the extreme philosophy articulated in the necessitarian vision "can only be realized in correspondingly extreme styles" (x). Mitchell therefore argues that naturalist form—including its "irritating repetitions and dislocations, its grammatical excesses and wrenching maneuvers"—is not only worth analyzing but actually serves as a primary source of narrative power (x).

Dreiser's necessitarian vision was largely influenced by the work of Herbert Spencer, mostly notably his *First Principles*. In the context of *Sister Carrie*, Spencer's laws of evolution and dissolution provided the foundation for the universe of imbalance. A close reading influenced by Michaels's theory of capitalist imbalance and Mitchell's discussion of the necessitarian vision reveals imbalance as an informing principle of the narrator's commentaries, the daunting cityscapes, the convoluted psychologies of the characters, and the plot's design.

I

Critics have often commented on Dreiser's indebtedness to Herbert Spencer. Louis Zanine observes that Dreiser's reading of Spencer "shifted his perception of the world around him" (3); Ronald Martin makes a similar

comment that Spencer offered Dreiser a "whole new view of the world and man's place in it" (221). We can also turn to the writer's own words. In *A Book About Myself*, Dreiser recalls his first reaction to the philosopher: "his *Synthetic Philosophy* (*First Principles*) quite blew me, intellectually, to bits" (457). This fascination would turn into infatuation, with Dreiser upholding Spencer in *Ev'ry Month* as "a great father of knowledge . . . [whose] word is to be spread before all" (240).

Dreiser did much of this spreading himself. In the essay "Equation Inevitable," he outlines his most valued Spencerian tenets. He first observes that human beings possess "the need of striking a balance or achieving an equilibrium," evident in such cherished concepts as "justice," "truth," and "harmony" (157). The desire for balance, however, is perpetually "interfered with by contrary forces, decays, mistaken notions, dreams which produce inharmony" (158). Much of this disharmony stems from an inscrutable disjuncture between human beings and the universe, referred to as "Nature." As Dreiser explains, "what *we* might consider necessary in the way of equation or balance, and what *Nature* would, are two very different things" (161).

This struggle for equation derives from Spencer's universe characterized by a perpetual struggle between "evolution" and "dissolution." According to Spencer, motion and change virtually constitute the bulk of existence—motion signals a difference in place, while change indicates a shift in direction. One form of motion and change exists in the law of evolution, described by Spencer as a transition "from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity" (347)—from simplicity to complexity. This shift, however, is transient. Although evolution culminates in an equilibrium that can be "very unstable or . . . very stable," this process of integration is nonetheless temporary (453). When integration ceases to dominate, the process of dissolution commences, characterized by "a change from integrated motions to disintegrated motions" (454)—from complexity to simplicity. Thus, at almost all times, there exist varying degrees of evolution and dissolution.

In Dreiser's "Equation Inevitable," the disjuncture between human beings and Nature stems from our foolish attempt to circumvent the process of dissolution. Our notion of "balance" involves a perpetually evolving existence. However, we are destined to possess "puny strengths," so that even the richest and most powerful are limited (162); that is, the force of evolution is always tempered by dissolution. Yet, as Dreiser clarifies, "limitations [are] essential to balance, reciprocity, part with part and force with force, are apparently never set aside entirely" (162). He goes on to suggest that a

balance of competing forces is actually preferable, highlighting the "essential disharmonies out of which alone harmonies may take their rise . . . startling harmonies, beauties and seeming intelligence" (169). As Rolf Lundén summarizes, any upheaval of the equation would mean "a leveling of the antithetic forces into a meaningless balance, a balance without tension" (32).

Several of these beliefs seem convoluted. Indeed, as Lundén notes, "Theodore Dreiser was inconsistent, often paradoxical, in his outlook on life" (11). Dreiser seems to embrace universal balance, as Nature is composed of infinite pairs of competing forces. Yet such forces continually change in strength and motion, effectively preventing the existence of a true equality, or balance of forces. Indeed, as Dreiser notes in "Equation Inevitable," the competing forces of evolution and dissolution arrive at only a "rough balance or equilibrium in Nature between the starkest extremes of its creative impulses—equation, equation. Nothing more nor less" (165). Thus, even within his insistence on balance, Dreiser's adjective "rough" admits a perpetual degree of imbalance. Because human beings are subject to this "rough law of balance" (163), constant shifts in individual force generate tendencies of imbalance within society. Finally, and perhaps most striking, is the perpetual imbalance between the universe and human beings: between its cycles of evolution and dissolution and our desire for endless lineal evolution. Long before he developed his theory of the "equation inevitable," Dreiser had already depicted a universe of imbalance in *Sister Carrie*: a system of perpetually changing processes of evolution and dissolution, which give rise to inscrutable disjunctures not only within the universe itself but between various human beings and between human beings and the universe.

In *Sister Carrie*, these ever-changing processes determine the fates of Carrie and Hurstwood: her evolution to fame and fortune against his dissolution to poverty and death. Yet Spencer's theories permeate the text on additional levels. The philosopher himself is mentioned near the beginning of chapter 10: "For all the liberal analysis of Spencer and our modern naturalistic philosophers, we have but an infantile perception of morals" (68). Despite his lauding of Spencer as the father of knowledge in "Equation Inevitable," Dreiser here appears to criticize the philosopher's abilities. This discrepancy may offer further proof of Lundén's observation concerning Dreiser's paradoxical thinking. However, it also fits into the larger scheme of imbalance: Dreiser's quibble over one aspect of Spencer's theory is couched within a full-length embracing of it, leaving a slight yet perceptible trace of contradiction in belief.

Dreiser's embracing of the philosopher is evident in his use of Spencer-

ian terminology, both in name and by implication. As Christopher Katope points out, "Spencer's laws of evolution and dissolution formed the primary architectonic element of the novel" (65). The term "evolution" first appears when the narrator submits that "evolution is ever in action" (57). Spencerian terms are also applied to various characters, particularly Carrie and Hurstwood. In reference to Carrie's dancing, the narrator notes that she would "practise her evolutions as prescribed" (281), later referring to her moves as "glittering evolutions" (289). Hurstwood's entrance into New York is tied to a more general comment on the "death and dissolution" of man (214), while Carrie views his firing as the "dissolution of her husband's business" (246).

Beyond specific references to Spencer and his terminology, the universe of imbalance is evident in scattered references to and applications of the philosopher's theories, not to mention in Dreiser's particular modification of them. Although the narrator may refer to equilibrium, and characters may strive for perpetual evolution, Dreiser suggests throughout the text that imbalance is not only the nature of existence but also the source of its delight and beauty.

II

Imbalance is illustrated in the novel's opening sequence, in which the narrator describes Carrie's choice between becoming "better" or "worse": "Of an intermediate balance, under the circumstances, there is no possibility" (1). Although pessimistic in tone, this line leaves space for balance: the suggestion that, under other circumstances, equilibrium is possible. However, the title of this first chapter, "The Magnet Attracting: A Waif Amid Forces," calls to mind Spencer's concept that the persistence of force gives rise to continuity of motion and perpetual change. Thus, even different circumstances would be bound to produce only a "rough balance."

Following the discussion of an intermediate balance, the narrator notes that "large forces" (1) are constantly at play. He then ups the ante, remarking: "Half the undoing of the unsophisticated and natural mind is accomplished by forces wholly superhuman" (1–2). This rapid increase in power, from "large" to "superhuman," is accelerated again in the narrator's later commentary. Chapter 8 opens with the following contemplation: "Among the forces which sweep and play throughout the universe, untutored man is but a wisp in the wind" (56). A striking aspect of this passage is its inclusion of the word "universe," which elevates force from already superhuman to cosmic proportions. This elevation echoes Spencer's assertion that force

represents "the ultimate of ultimates" (149). It also anticipates the discrepancy between the force of the universe and that of human beings. As Dreiser would note in "Equation Inevitable," man may increase his level of force, "[b]ut that he should succeed in permanently so doing is not within his scope unless he should grow to be the universe itself" (178).

However, in the sentence following the one quoted above, the narrator of *Sister Carrie* expresses a somewhat contrasting opinion concerning the current and future states of human existence: "Our civilization is still in a middle stage, scarcely beast, in that it is no longer wholly guided by instinct; scarcely human, in that it is not yet wholly guided by reason" (56). This discussion of a middle stage embodies Dreiser's belief in a rough balance of competing forces, particularly instinct and reason. The narrative aside also supports Spencer's belief in the movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity, evidenced in the shift from instinct to reason and free will—from simplicity to complexity. Yet as the aside continues, it appears to contradict a number of Dreiser's cherished Spencerian principles. The narrator goes on to theorize about a shift in morality: "He will not forever balance thus between good and evil. When this jangled free-will and instinct shall have been adjusted . . . man will no longer vary. The needle of understanding will yet point steadfast and unwavering to the distant pole of truth" (57).

A shift of this magnitude will eliminate the vital competing force of evil—a primary source of dissolution—while also limiting the heterogeneous nature of evolution. That is, man will successfully circumvent the process of dissolution by assuming a level of force on a par with that of the universe—an action Dreiser later dismisses, both in terms of possibility and desirability, in "Equation Inevitable." Yet the sense of contradiction does not end here, for the passage suggests that truth will remain a "distant pole," thereby leaving room for the process of dissolution and maintaining a rough balance. Dreiser's later statements in "Equation Inevitable" also complicate this passage. Although he dismisses the possibility of perpetual evolution, he leaves room for its eventual attainment: "the song of ultimate perfection continues yearly, from century to century, to be sung. The Divine, far off event (which, if anything, is Nirvana) is surely coming" (167).[1]

These various assertions collectively indicate an "imbalance" in content. Even without Dreiser's views in "Equation Inevitable," readers endure a somewhat confusing narrative presence—one that that both asserts and retracts the possibility of perpetual evolution, thereby giving rise to a shifting and, by extension, increasingly heterogeneous understanding of the novel.

Such ironies are reiterated in the discussion of middle-aged man in chapter 33, where the narrator meditates upon Hurstwood's psychological decline: "Frequently there is a period in between the cessation of youthful accretion and the setting in, in the case of the middle-aged man, of the tendency toward decay when the two processes are almost perfectly balanced and there is little doing in either direction" (239). Rather than indicating true balance, middle age is nothing more than the momentary exchange of dominance between evolution and dissolution. As Spencer explains, this form of equilibrium varies in terms of stability, lasting between "a few days or . . . millions of years" (453); nevertheless, it is transient. Furthermore, within the narrative aside is the admittance that this equilibrium is unstable. Consider the qualifiers "almost" and "little"—adjectives suggesting Dreiser's "rough balance." "Almost" undercuts the phrase "perfectly balanced," while "little" suggests that, even in this supposedly stable period, movement does occur.

The imbalances conveyed by the narrator's asides on the nature of the universe are actually strengthened by depictions of the novel's two major settings, particularly Chicago and New York. One source of the pervasive sense of imbalance in these depictions is Dreiser's repetitive diction. Mitchell considers Dreiser's use of repetition in *American Tragedy* an effective means of generating an "echoing structure" and "interconnected pattern" (56). A similar effect occurs in *Sister Carrie*, where Dreiser employs repetitive diction in evoking his daunting cityscapes. Cities are huge; human beings and their belongings are miniscule. Essentially, these discrepancies in size relate to discrepancies in force. Not only are human beings pitted against superhuman forces throughout the universe; they are also, paradoxically, made to confront the superhuman forces of cities, themselves a human construct.

Carrie experiences such disproportion even before entering Chicago. In listening to Drouet's descriptions of theaters, crowds, and residences, she becomes aware of her "insignificance in the presence of so much magnificence" (5). These feelings are subtly echoed in Carrie's behavior. The narrator observes that she feels "a little choked for breath" and "a little sick" (7). She also contemplates her hometown, considering "that Columbia City was only a little way off" (7). Then, upon entering Chicago, she reels with thoughts of the "vast city which stretched for miles and miles in every direction" (9).

Dreiser's repetitive diction requires readers to plow through an almost insurmountable number of references to Chicago's size. In the relatively short second chapter, which prepares for Carrie's first entrance into the city

on her own, the word "vast" occurs on seven occasions. Weaving in and out are synonyms such as "big," "great," "giant," "huge," "ample," "imposing," "large," "important, and "mighty" (8–13).[2] By contrast, human beings—including their personal objects and immediate surroundings—are relatively undetectable. As disclosed in the second chapter, Minnie's apartment is "small," as is her furniture, particularly the rocking chair (10, 11). Even Carrie's breakfast is described as "little" (11). Thus, the force of cities is further strengthened in light of human beings' relative insignificance.

Physical discrepancies also pervade Carrie's job search throughout chapter 4. Upon entering the wholesale district, she is struck by the "wide windows," "imposing signs," the "great door," and "vast hive of six or seven floors" (13). She later enters a "great" wholesale shoe company, only to be bombarded by its "broad plate windows" and the manager's "large open ledger" (14). Interestingly enough, not all aspects of these companies are frightening. Carrie looks upon a "small brass sign" as well as "a small table" (13, 14). Just as differences of force exist between cities and human beings, gaps open up between Carrie's level of force and the force of companies, and differences in force are revealed within the companies.

An individual's force is not absolute. Relative to his less important customers, Hurstwood, for instance, possesses a "substantial air" and "sense of his importance" (33). The narrator also comments that his stewardship is "imposing" (33). Yet these descriptions are couched within observations that Hurstwood is "clever in many little things" and that he has a "little office" (33). Such qualifiers indicate Hurstwood's insignificance relative to larger competing forces, be it the owners of Fitzgerald and Moy's, the city of Chicago, or the universe of imbalance. These descriptions also prepare the ground for Hurstwood's arrival in New York. Upon his entry, the narrator observes, Hurstwood figuratively shrinks: "Whatever a man like Hurstwood could be in Chicago, it is very evident that he would be but an inconspicuous drop in an ocean like New York" (214). Thus, even cities compete with each other in terms of force. Dreiser's diction is again worth noting, as he litters the text—within the space of only two pages—with numerous references to size: "great," "small," "magnificent," "little," "greatness," "awesome," "ample," and "paltry" (214–15).[3] Human beings are engulfed within the maw that is New York, leading the narrator to remark, "In other words, Hurstwood was nothing" (214).

Such repetitive diction could be dismissed as evidence of Dreiser's lack of artistry. Indeed, repetition of a handful of frequently monosyllabic adjectives smacks of a limited vocabulary. Yet if we examine the *effects* of his diction, we find that it intensifies our sense of imbalance as the book's in-

forming principle. It is commonly accepted that repetition—much in the same manner as rhyme—is a rhetorical device with both mnemonic and aesthetic value. Repetitions such as the seven occurrences of the word "vast" within a single short chapter create expectations that, when satisfied, produce something like the sense of balance produced by a metronome; we come to expect (perhaps unconsciously) the adjective "vast" to appear whenever the narrator describes gross physical surroundings. This correlation connotes a sense of formal balance by continually aligning setting with a dominant word. Yet the word's meaning is such that it further highlights imbalance; namely, the discrepancy of force between human beings and their physical surroundings. Thus, an extra-logical sense of imbalance emerges between denotation and repetition, that is, between what the adjective means (content) and what it does (form). In Spencerian terms, content and form represent two competing forces. Much like the incongruous narrative asides, the contradictory forces of content and form give rise to a perpetually changing, heterogeneous text.

These patterns of imbalance are further complicated as we move our attention from setting to character. The novel's three primary characters—Carrie, Hurstwood, and Drouet—enter into a series of interpersonal relationships only to find themselves caught in emotional tugs-of-war. These relationships take the form of love triangles. From an architectural standpoint, triangles are stable, proportionate shapes—hence their presence in numerous bridges and buildings. Yet within the text, triangles confound balance, given their odd number of sides (i.e., individuals involved). Of greatest difficulty is the characters' inability to sustain equal feelings for the other two members of the triangle. Instead, they are left with a rough balance of affection, as the evolution of one relationship is countered by the dissolution of the other. In Spencerian terms, these competing forces give triangles a heterogeneous shape, in that continual shifts in affection lead to ever-changing sets of relationships.

Carrie, for instance, is involved in a love triangle with Hurstwood and Drouet. However, each man is involved in a love triangle of his own: Hurstwood with Carrie and Julia; Drouet with Carrie and a host of unnamed chambermaids and the like. None of these triangles is ever in balance. Upon first beholding Drouet, for instance, Carrie sees that he is "not only rosy-cheeked, but radiant. He was the essence of sunshine and good-humour" (43–44). Yet after briefly encountering Hurstwood, she becomes convinced that "here was the superior man" (82). Although Hurstwood is similarly incapable of equally loving each partner, his struggle exhibits a paradoxical sense of balance: namely, he finds that his feelings for Carrie

"grew in almost evenly balanced proportion" to his hatred for Julia (85). Of course, as with the aside on middle-age, the qualifier "almost" signals a lack of true balance. Finally, Drouet is simply unable to curtail his libido, described by the narrator as "an insatiable love of variable pleasure" (3). Even during his greatest moment of attachment to Carrie in chapter 20, he finds himself flirting with the chambermaid.

Michaels initially views these love triangles aesthetically, noting that they are perhaps indicative of Dreiser's own belief in "the almost structural impossibility of equilibrium" (42). However, Michaels's focus on implicit capitalist ideology leads to a slightly different conclusion concerning the source of these triangles. He recalls that the "economy runs on desire, which is to say, money, or the impossibility of ever having enough money" (44); thus, emotional imbalances stem from financial preoccupations. Although this theory is certainly intriguing, it runs the risk of overlooking the characters' emotional complexities. Brief examinations of the internal struggles faced by Carrie, Hurstwood, and Bob Ames prove that their psychologies are extraordinarily convoluted. In particular, each character seems to experience (or to reflect) the human desire for an ever-evolving existence. Yet a closer look at their behavior indicates their immersion within the rough balance of competing forces.

Before discussing the inability to evolve continually, it might help to examine those characters that largely cease to evolve at all. Minnie, for instance, possesses a "mind which invariably adjusted itself, without much complaining, to such surroundings as its industry could make for it" (24). Such behavior is contradictory to Carrie's, whose "craving for pleasure was so strong" (24). Thus, during a discussion about visiting the theater, Minnie asks for Hanson's permission "without a shade of desire on her part" (24). A similar acquiescence is evident in the various unnamed factory women. The workers are certainly more active than Minnie, as evident in their bawdy talk, which makes them rather "free with the fellows" (40). Yet, despite the undertone of sexual desire, the factory women are largely inert, as they "seemed satisfied with their lot" (40). Collectively, these various women simply lack a drive for evolution, and thus are dominated by dissolution. Rather than escaping the superhuman forces, they have merely succumbed to them.

In contrast to this state of conscious decline is Carrie's insatiable striving for a perpetually evolving existence. Occasionally, Carrie appears to achieve the impossible by experiencing this human form of "balance." Consider her brief shopping excursion in chapter 7. While Carrie glances at the jackets, the narrator pontificates on the joy of attaining equilibrium: "There

is nothing in this world more delightful than that middle-state in which we mentally balance at times, possessed of the means, lured by desire, and yet deterred by conscience or want of decision. When Carrie began wandering around the store amid the fine displays she was in this mood" (51). Within the mental and temporal space preceding the purchase, Carrie appears momentarily to step outside the superhuman forces by entering into a transient moment of human "balance": happiness without consequences. At the moment of purchase, however—when Carrie attempts to transfer the nature of her balance from mental to physical—the process of dissolution is reinstated. As the narrator observes, with each of Carrie's purchases during the shopping spree, she sinks "deeper . . . into the entanglement" (54). Michaels's theory applies at this point, for Carrie's desire for material wealth leads to her immersion in dissolution.

Yet we can also analyze this scene in terms of the larger struggle between evolution and dissolution. Carrie's moment preceding the purchase is nothing more than a pause in her ongoing transformation from homogeneity to heterogeneity. As with the snapshot described in the middle-stage theory, the mental space preceding the purchase is simply a temporal link between one stage of Carrie's existence and another. Thus, readers are privy to a pseudo-pause in Carrie's development. As if aware of her fragile "middle-state," Carrie delays in spending the money, evident through the use of descriptors such as "wandering," "paused," "lingered," and "wavered" (51–52).

We see a similar struggle between evolution and dissolution in Hurstwood. He initially possesses a passivity similar to that of Minnie and the factory women. For instance, the narrator describes his dislike of confrontation: "He would not argue, he would not talk freely. . . . What he could not correct, he would ignore. There was a tendency in him to walk away from the impossible thing" (63). Thus, he acquiesces in interpersonal relationships, allowing his wife to exercise force over him. As Lundén explains, Hurstwood exists in a "social coma" (125). This coma even extends to his position at Fitzgerald and Moy's, where Lundén observes that "his submissiveness makes him the perfect man in his position, never disagreeing with the customers, always ready to serve and accept" (125). Hurstwood extends this social acquiescence to a general rule: "His was not the order of nature to trouble for something better, unless the better was immediately and sharply contrasted" (66). Therefore, Hurstwood is also guilty of allowing the superhuman forces free reign. Although he certainly strives for position and material wealth, his desire for evolution is nonetheless deficient.

Yet conflict enters into Hurstwood's situation during his relationship

with Carrie, which Lundén characterizes as a "charming element of disorder and revolt" (125). Hurstwood's theft from Fitzgerald and Moy's, motivated by his relationship with Carrie, is particularly convoluted. The narrator seems to suggest that Hurstwood achieves a state of equilibrium, a "balance between duty and desire" (192) that delays a decision, "a sense of right, which is proportionate in power and strength to his evil tendency" (192). Despite this suggestion of true balance, the scene is complicated by the dissolutive presence of superhuman forces. These forces are best represented in the mysterious locking of the safe: "It had sprung! Did he do it?" (193). Given the unknowable nature of such forces, this question can never be answered. Yet it is safe to conclude that Hurstwood does not progress from a period of limited evolution to one of true balance. Rather, his behavior merely generates a momentary rough balance of forces that scarcely halts his movement towards complexity.

Oddly enough, however, Hurstwood's increasingly complex existence stems not from evolution but rather from his triggering of dissolution. Before encountering Carrie, Hurstwood's acquiescence was actually the transitional phase during which evolution is gradually overcome by dissolution. This transient balance, as stated earlier, can last between days and millions of years. As the narrator explains, in a "period rapidly approaching three years—Hurstwood had been moving along in an even path" (239). Yet his dissolution has been increasing, even though he fails to recognize it.

The narrator seems initially to adopt a similar form of blindness when suggesting in chapter 33 that Hurstwood's middle-aged status represents true balance of the forces of evolution and dissolution. From the previously discussed aside in this chapter concerning middle-aged man, it is evident that dissolution is inevitable. Nevertheless, the narrator remarks that Hurstwood's "state was so well balanced that an absolute change for the worse did not show" (240). The phrase "did not show," however, does not suggest balance but rather a concealment of imbalance. Being middle-aged, Hurstwood cannot escape dissolution by dying young; nor can he live perpetually via incorporation, given his recent firing from Fitzgerald and Moy's. Instead, he attempts to deny his dissolutive state by continually diverting his attention. For instance, while on the train to Canada, Hurstwood "only sat and looked into the past" (197). Upon staring into Carrie's eyes, his "many sins . . . were for the moment forgotten" (205). Finally, the narrator observes, "He was always forgetting something—his wife, Carrie, his need of money, present situation, or something" (211).

Hurstwood's dissolutive state is compounded when the narrator adopts another connotation of the word "balance." When not engaging in diver-

sion, Hurstwood's "comparison between his old state and his new one showed a balance for the worse" (240). Thus, this second context of "balance" suggests not equilibrium but a debit—evidence not of evolution but of dissolution. It is tempting to invoke Michaels's theory at this point, given that Hurstwood's actions are explained in economic terms. Indeed, Hurstwood's desire for wealth leads to his increasingly unbalanced existence. However, to focus only on the economic connotation of "balance" ignores a possible pun. In this sense, Hurstwood's rough balance is "for the worse" in that it is more heavily weighted to the side of dissolution.

This sense of duality emerges again with the character of Bob Ames. His struggles exhibit a particularly knotted rough balance: subsistence versus wealth, pure sympathy versus sexual attraction, and selflessness versus a desire for fame. On the one hand, Ames is upheld as the ideal of balance and moderation, evident in his cautionary advice to Carrie: "The world is full of desirable situations, but, unfortunately, we can occupy but one at a time" (355). David Humphries explains that critics have often "labeled Ames a static 'spokesman' of Dreiser's own views . . . as a structural device" (36). On the other hand, Michaels contends that Ames serves no purpose but to incite further desire in Carrie. He observes, "Ames represents . . . an ideal of dissatisfaction" (42). Although this critical disagreement attests to Ames's complexities, both readings fail to consider the character's larger hypocritical tendencies.

Larry Hussman persuasively reads Ames as a figure rife with contradiction. Hussman has particular problems with Ames's behavior during his dinner conversation with Carrie at Sherry's, the exclusive "temple of gastronomy" (233). Ames comments, " 'I shouldn't care to be rich,' he told her, as the dinner proceeded and the supply of food warmed up his sympathies; 'not rich enough to spend money this way' " (237). Hussman observes that the "alert reader should be less impressed when he notes that Carrie's new idol is 'well-dressed' and that his repugnance for Sherry's does not noticeably spoil his meal" (25). Closer reading of this passage reveals further contradictions. Most notably, although Ames claims to disdain any desire to be rich, the presence of food "warmed up his sympathies." Thus, he possesses some affinity for wealth. Even this admitted affinity is somewhat knotted, as Ames merely rejects any *future* desire to purchase the food he eats, evident in the modifier "this way."

Hussman further reveals that even though Ames seems free from "any craving for applause . . . he has become a famous celebrity as a result of his inventions" (28). Hussman also notices Ames's sexual attraction to Carrie, leading in part to his general conclusion that Ames is "anything but consis-

tent and clear" (26). When placed in the context of evolution and dissolution, Ames emerges as anything but a truly balanced character. Far from being the detached spokesman against imbalance, Ames is one of its strictest adherents.

These competing forces of evolution and dissolution are extended in the novel's fourth "character" to struggle with balance: the rocking chair. More frequent than the presence of both Ames and Drouet, the rocking chair conspicuously appears in numerous settings, including Minnie's apartment, Hurstwood and Carrie's flat in New York, and a host of hotel rooms. Furthermore, the novel's three main characters—Carrie, Drouet, and Hurstwood—repeatedly find themselves in rocking chairs. Lundén grounds the rocking chair image in Dreiser's general obsession with a seesaw motion. He looks to Spencer's chapter in *First Principles* "The Rhythm of Motion" as the "origin of Dreiser's image of the seesaw, that the equation is in constant change, causing the power to alternate between the forces" (67). As Katope similarly points out, the rocking chair's "properties of rhythm, balance, and motion make it a perfectly appropriate device in a work based on mechanistic principles" (70).

The main design principle of the rocking chair is a dislocation of one's center of gravity. It is a site of perpetual movement in which competing forces give rise to changing motions. These forward and backward motions parallel the laws of evolution and dissolution: the chair progresses to a point of equilibrium, at which time a process of reversal initiates, only to terminate itself and return in the initial direction. Yet there exists no true balance, only a rough balance lasting only as long as no additional force is applied.

What happens if the characters are placed within these sites of cyclical motion? As Jerome Loving suggests, the rocking chair reveals the "dreadful and painful frustration brought on by not succeeding in life" (7). Indeed, we witness Carrie, Drouet, and Hurstwood often contemplating their present failures and future desires within the confines of this symbol of frustration. Carrie rocks and stares out of a window, contemplating how to scatter "her meagre four-fifty per week" and thus attain happiness (22). Drouet sits "in a rocking-chair to think the better" after hearing rumors of Carrie's indiscretions (146). Hurstwood diverts his unpleasant thoughts by rocking and reading news of the past, described as the "Lethean waters . . . of telegraphed intelligence" (252). The rocking chair, like their lives, represents movement without progress: although it and they gesture forward in a process of evolution, both will eventually shift backwards in a process of dissolution. Thus, despite their moments of progress, the characters can never achieve more than a rough balance.

As part of Dreiser's universe of imbalance, miniscule examples of competing forces must mirror larger instances of conflict. Thus, Ames's contradictions parallel cosmic struggles between evolution and dissolution. Similarly, the numerous contradictions epitomized in the rocking chair have their counterpart in a more pervasive formal component: the plot design of the novel. Beyond the effects of Dreiser's diction, plot design gives rise to additional friction between the forces of form and content. Simply put, *Sister Carrie* is a beautifully constructed text, possessing a sense of exactness and symmetry typically reserved for neoclassical models of literature such as *Tom Jones*. As Richard Lehan reveals, much of this exactness relates to Spencerian laws concerning the shift from homogeneity to heterogeneity: "We have a progressive sequence at work here, and the narrative meaning of the novel cannot be divorced from the causality of which it is a part. Reverse any one scene in *Sister Carrie* and the action stops" (73). Symmetry is evident in the novel's settings, as the text is almost evenly divided: the first half occurs in Chicago, the latter in New York. Also of interest are the intersecting plots of ascension and decline, which parallel Spencer's laws of evolution and dissolution: Carrie's rise to fame against Hurstwood's fall to death.

These parallels make even more apparent the sheer magnitude of imbalance that permeates the universe of *Sister Carrie*. The novel's progressive sequence, for instance, highlights discrepancies in content, such as the ironic narrative asides. It also signals the extent to which the forces of cities are grossly out of proportion to those of human beings. More importantly, the exactness and symmetry of Dreiser's form reveals itself as the single instance of balance within the novel. Each force has its equal and opposite counterforce—the novel's first half has Chicago, the second has New York; Carrie's rise is balanced by Hurstwood's fall. The novel is also exempt from the process of dissolution—in fact, it is not subject to cycles or motions of any kind. To understand this feat, just consider the permanent nature of the text: once published, it is unchangeable. Even if the author or publisher decides to make retrospective alterations, these changes are indicated in subsequent editions. Therefore, even after Dreiser's dissolution and death, the text remains.

Of course, by this rationale, every work of art escapes the cycles of evolution and dissolution. Yet in a novel so explicitly dominated by forces of imbalance, Dreiser's construction of an enduring and formally balanced novel deftly elevates himself above the superhuman forces. Even more intriguing, he successfully utilizes Spencer's theories of motion, force, evolution, and dissolution to construct a loophole: proving that art—particularly,

his art—represents a triumph over perpetual change and unceasing imbalance. In this sense, Dreiser's form reveals yet another irony. Despite his proclaimed respect and fascination for Spencer's theories, his pivotal act as author of *Sister Carrie* is to posit himself, not Spencer, as the "father of knowledge" (240).

Dreiser's boldness, however, doesn't end there. Shifting to *Sister Carrie*'s conclusion, the importance of form emerges yet again. Although the final lines never entirely dislocate themselves from the subject of Carrie, they clearly and effectively point the finger at readers: "Know, then, that for you is neither surfeit nor content. In your rocking-chair, by your window dreaming, shall you long, alone. In your rocking-chair, by your window, shall you dream such happiness as you may never feel" (369). The referent for "you" is clearly contained in the exclamation, "Oh, Carrie, Carrie!" (369). Yet following this line is a more general reference to "the human heart!" (369). Use of the definite article pervades the passage in phrases such as "the heart knows," "the feet weary," "the heartaches," and "the longings" (369). Moreover, the striving for happiness is not linked to Carrie, but rather to the general heart: "it saith" onward and "it follows" beauty (369). Returning to Dreiser's use of second-person pronouns, we see that Carrie is left behind. Despite the specific references to the rocking chair and window, the passage reverberates with a more pervasive sense of general human failure. This failure is made even more poignant by the use of "you," which successfully and directly assimilates readers into Dreiser's universe of imbalance: no longer are we distinct from the characters dominated by universal forces. Rather, like them, we are left to contend with the cycles of evolution and dissolution.

Despite what we've learned about the roles of motion and force—via reading the novel—this concluding passage suggests that we are trapped within the circumscribed universe. Although Dreiser's art transcends imbalance, we cannot. His form can therefore be said to culminate in our ultimate awareness of the expansive nature of his universe—one that cannot be contained by narrators, characters, the figure of Herbert Spencer, or even countless readers of *Sister Carrie*.[4]

Notes

1. Given that "Equation Inevitable" was published a full two decades after the novel (1920), it is unfair to suggest that the fiction contradicts the theory. However,

in light of Dreiser's already noted obsession with Spencer prior to and during *Sister Carrie*'s composition, it is fair to proffer that such contradictory beliefs were already brewing within the author.

2. The majority of these instances are repeated on several occasions: "great" occurs three times; "huge," four times; "important" is echoed in "importance."

3. "Greatness" occurs three times; "little" occurs twice.

4. My thanks go to Billie Bailey, Christine Caver, Mark Womack, and Jeanne Campbell Reesman for their ongoing guidance and encouragement.

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An Ordinary Tourist: Cultural Vision and Narrative Form in Theodore Dreiser's *A Traveler at Forty*

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During his first European trip, Theodore Dreiser stops at an English inn where he meets a Scottish traveling salesman who remarks to him, "I suppose you're traveling to *see* things" (*Traveler* 106; emphasis added). Dreiser's *A Traveler at Forty* (1913), his first travel book and a record of this 1911–12 European trip, displays his remarkable powers of observation, as E. F. Edgett observes in a review of *Traveler* in the *Boston Evening Transcript* (December 3, 1913):

> blessed be the writer who in telling of his travels can rob them of the sting of the conventional and the terrors of the commonplace. . . . Blessed then be Theodore Dreiser, who in visiting England, France, Italy, Germany and Holland follows main-travelled roads with a seeing eye, an observant mind and a wide-awake energy that takes immediate and constant control of the reader. As in "Sister Carrie," in "Jennie Gerhardt" and in "The Financier" Mr. Dreiser was no ordinary novelist, so in "A Traveler at Forty" he is no ordinary tourist. The success of Mr. Dreiser in telling the tale of his first trip to and through Europe comes from his writing of it as if he were writing a novel. (24)

Sinclair Lewis also comments on Dreiser's visual acuity in his February 21, 1914, review in the *St. Louis Republic*: "For everywhere he goes he watches people with a terrible intentness and a curiosity about them that never rests until he has their secrets."[1] Lewis argues that Dreiser's *Traveler* offers readers much more than mere travelogue, while Edgett characterizes Dreiser as a "wide-awake" writer (24) who "novelizes" his travel experience. Both

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critics suggest that Dreiser's keen observation and attention to detail make him more than just an ordinary tourist.

However, neither Edgett nor Lewis accounts for the ways in which Dreiser's cultural perspectives in *Traveler* are affected by his position as a traveler and tourist, and this trend continues in contemporary criticism, where neither recent work on Dreiser and American culture nor recent essays on *Traveler* deal with the cultural perspective in his travel texts.[2] Daniel Boorstin observes that the developing notion of the tourist in the early nineteenth century creates a distinction between the traveler, an active participant in the journey who "strenuously" searches for adventure and cultural insight, and the tourist, a passive "pleasure-seeker" who goes about "sight seeing" and expects all travel arrangements to be handled by someone else (85). In *Traveler*, Dreiser's vision fluctuates between cultural insight and mere spectatorship, between a desire to "see" as a traveler and the irresistible urge to gaze as a tourist. Theorizing the narrative implications of such ideological quandaries, Fredric Jameson argues that "the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolvable social contradictions" (79). In his narrative, Dreiser struggles with social contradictions as he attempts to enact the authentic journey of the traveler while adopting the voyeuristic gaze of the tourist, as he struggles to convey his sympathy for the lives of the working class or the culturally disenfranchised while entertaining a fascination with the spectacle of such lives. *Traveler*'s cultural vision anticipates Dreiser's standpoint in *A Hoosier Holiday* that "spectacle . . . provides all we know of life" (473) and his later statement in *Dawn* that "I take no meaning from life other than the picture it presents to the eye" (588).[3] In *Traveler*, Dreiser's tourist gaze determines his aesthetic "solutions" to social problems; he approaches such circumstances as part of the aesthetic wholeness of life's spectacle, or in this case tourist spectacle, rather than as serious problems worthy of intellectual engagement and imaginative energy. Although Dreiser may be no ordinary novelist, the narrative representation of people, places, and social conditions in his travel writing position him as the most ordinary of tourists.[4]

Frances Bartkowski extends Boorstin's dichotomy of the traveler/tourist by suggesting that a travel writer's reference to the texts which have allowed him or her to "name" and "preconceive" a place demonstrates the ways in which travelers (whom Boorstin might term "tourists" in this context) differ from explorers (21). Renate von Bardeleben argues that the "Dreiserian self" portrayed in his European travel diaries is an explorer, or "adventurer," "with an unexpurgated daily record, coolly observant and

hunting his material, which is partly his travels and partly himself" ("Dreiser's Diaristic Mode" 39). Yet, in tourist fashion, Dreiser depends on visual and written texts to name and preconceive Europe in both his diary and *Traveler*, the published text based on the diary. Material evidence of his reliance on tourist culture includes his extensive collection of postcards from his journeys[5] and the numerous travel brochures and tour itineraries he saves in his 1911–12 European diaries. In addition to relying on written and visual tourist texts, Dreiser also notes his dependence on his travel company, Thomas Cook & Sons, to provide mail and banking services abroad, arrange routes and tickets "altered at . . . [his] slightest whim," and see that he is assisted in every way throughout the journey (393).

As Dreiser depends on these texts and agencies to smooth his way through Europe, he reveals the ways in which tourist culture, as Rockwell Gray notes, "reduces cultural difference," "eras[es] or cushion[s] the salutary jolts provided by truly different environments," and robs travel of its "savor" (42). Dreiser also trusts his traveling companion, Barfleur (actually Grant Richards), to guide him through Europe, fostering, as Bardeleben notes, an image of Dreiser as "dependent and indebted" to Barfleur ("From Travel Guide" 182) but, more importantly, revealing in Barfleur's absence Dreiser's heightened dependence on tourist culture when left to travel on his own. For example, in one chapter of *Traveler*, "A First Glimpse of Italy," Dreiser "plunge[s]" into his Baedeker "for Italian wisdom," wishing that he had read more history in preparation for his trip (300). He reads Baedeker's art history of Florence, Genoa, and Pisa, frequently "interrupting" his study to glance at "every interesting scene" (303), such as the small Italian town "rich in whites, pinks, browns and blues, a world of clothes-lines showing between rows of buildings, and the crowds, pure Italian in type, plodding to and fro along the streets" (302–03). These scenes, interspersed with and informed by his Baedeker reading, provide his first sense of the "tang of Italy . . . that wonderful love of color" (303).

Dreiser's reliance on the discourse of tourist culture becomes strikingly clear in his reaction to Baedeker's advice about visiting Venice: "care should be taken in embarking and disembarking, especially when the tide is low, exposing the slimy lower steps" (398). Dreiser claims that this simple description "as much as anything" he has ever read "visualized" the city for him (398). Further, he finds the romance and color promised by the travel guide in his brief adventure with Maria Bastida, a "most interesting type" (400) of young woman he meets on the train from Florence to Venice. Stepping with Maria into a gondola in Venice, Dreiser considers the "singularly romantic" nature of "entering Venice by moonlight and gliding

off in a gondola in company with an unknown and charming Italian girl" (401–2). He suggestively pleads with her to "do" Venice with him for his first time, but she declines. "It is a year," writes Dreiser, "since I last saw the flaxen-haired Maria, and I find that she remains quite as firmly fixed in my memory as Venice itself, which is perhaps as it should be" (402). His encounter with Maria fulfills his expectations about the art and romance of Italy generated by his Baedeker reading, and in Venice and elsewhere he seeks out, finds, and narrates the experience dictated by his guidebook.

The influence of tourist discourse is also evident when, on the Palatine Hill in Rome, Dreiser praises his tour guide, A. D. Tani, noting in a chapter titled "The Art of Signor Tanni" that it is "far more interesting to walk through these old ruins and underground chambers accompanied by some one [*sic*] who loves them, and who is interested in them, and who by fees to the state servitors has smoothed the way, so that the ancient forgotten chambers are properly lighted for you, than it is to go alone" (343). In his diary, Dreiser retains a pamphlet titled "Lectures and Excursions by A. D. Tani" advertising a lecture on the Palatine Hill. The cover of the pamphlet promises "Sight-seeing in Rome with a *Roman* made interesting, pleasant and instructive," and the pamphlet contains information about Tani's credentials as an archeologist and scholar and testimonials of past participants who proclaim that, with Tani. The visitor "[s]ees all that is worth seeing" (4) and "[l]earns in a short time, what months of reading would fail to accomplish" (4). In the pamphlet, author Douglas Sladen also praises Tani's "sound classical scholarship," "knowledge of local traditions," punctuality, and fluent English. "When you come to Rome you should take care to visit it with a Roman . . . like Signor Tani," Sladen advises (5). *Traveler* confirms the pamphlet's glowing opinions of the guide, praising Tani's "human explanations," which allow Dreiser to experience the wonder and thrill of the ruins and perceive the reality of the famous figures who lived there (343–44); however, Tani's canned lectures also mediate Dreiser's experience with the ruins, robbing him of an authentic adventure.

Dreiser again turns to tourist culture when, while Barfleur returns to London on business, he visits the Louvre (*Traveler* 247), most likely relying on a brochure he slips into his diary titled "How to Visit the Louvre," which informs visitors that the extensive collections of the museum "cannot . . . be visited without a guide. To enter alone is to perform a useless gymnastic feat." Visitors will experience frustration and waste time, the brochure promises, and may pass by masterpieces never to be seen again; they "will see in one hour, with an experienced conductor, more than [they] could see

in three or four hours alone" and will leave with the satisfaction that their visit has been "complete." Visitors are also warned away from false guides lurking in the Paris streets and are encouraged to guarantee the authenticity of such guides by asking to see evidence of their authorization. Dreiser inserts into the diary a similar brochure from "The Catacombs of St. Domitilla and the Basilica of St. Petronilla," complete with a map and a detailed explanation of what one will (and, implicitly, should) see there. These brochures suggest the central role that tourist culture plays in directing Dreiser's gaze and experiences in Europe.

Often, tourist culture supplements the previous cultural texts, including art works upon which Dreiser bases his travel expectations. For example, he notes that Holland is "first and foremost the land of Frans Hals and Rembrandt van Ryn and that whole noble company of Dutch painters" (*Traveler* 487). His train ride into Holland "visualizes" all he has "fancied concerning Holland," that it is a "mild little land . . . [s]o level, so smooth, so green" (491). And he discovers that the countryside near Amsterdam, Haarlem, The Hague, and Rotterdam is "as beautiful as the picture post-cards sold everywhere indicated" (501) . Holland's canals, in particular, leave an "airy impression of romance" and "pure poetry" on his mind. "There are certain visions or memories to which the heart of every individual instinctively responds," he says; "[t]he canals of Holland are one such to me" (502). Holland's visual charm is captured in a brochure for a steam yacht excursion from Amsterdam to the Isle of Marken, which Dreiser saves in his diary. The brochure, titled "*Havenstoombootdienst*: Time-Table," details the stages of the journey in language similar to that of Dreiser's descriptions of his Holland experiences, informing travelers that they will pass through locks leading to an historic canal and then on to the village of Broek-in-Waterland, where they will have time to walk through the "charming" village and visit a farm that produces cheese. Travelers are promised attractive views of the world-famous "quaint costumes" in the fishing village of Volendam and elsewhere on the Island of Marken, where "the curious built [*sic*] of the houses, the old fashioned costumes and little canals and dykes form a picturesque ensemble well worth seeing. The populace chiefly consisting of fisherfolk, still keep up their old customs, and even in Holland themselves are considered a curiosity." Tourist literature confirms Dreiser's preconceptions of Holland, colors his impressions there, and is eventually reproduced in *Traveler*'s narrative.

Despite his obvious reliance on tourist culture, Dreiser considers himself superior to the annoying American sightseers he first becomes "definitely and in an irritated way conscious of" in Florence (389). He surmises from

watching them that their chief motivation is to "say that they had been abroad" and to gather "aimless 'impressions' wherewith to browbeat their neighbors" (391). Dreiser suggests that if one were to try to educate them on the "true details" of what they see, or on the "historical development of Art, they would fly in horror. They have no room in their little crania for anything save their own notions" (392). Apparently, Dreiser fancies himself a traveler who can see, who is abroad for reasons other than to best his neighbors, who does not require the recommendations of others, and who has some interest in and knowledge of the background and history of what he sees. He argues against his status as a tourist by distancing himself from the crass American sightseer, managing, as Bardeleben notes, to characterize himself as the "gentleman 'traveling in style,' " "an amiable guide and companion who, though critical and intelligent, will not exceed certain set boundaries of propriety" ("Dreiser's Diaristic Mode" 39); in other words, he projects himself as "no ordinary tourist," as Edgett observes (24). However, in light of Dreiser's fascination with and dependence on tourist culture, his condescending attitude toward American tourists is ironic, exposing his (perhaps unconscious) fear that he is also a mere tourist.

Dreiser works to establish himself as "no ordinary tourist" from the beginning of *Traveler*. He states that there is "something really improving in a plain, straightforward understanding of life," and, claiming that he is at a point in his life when he "accept[s] no creeds," he relates how he has received an invitation from his "old literary friend" Barfleur to travel to Europe (4), record his impressions, and then publish his observations with Barfleur's assistance (5). Despite the arranged nature of the trip, with Barfleur acting as instigator and guide, Dreiser characterizes it as a "portentous event" (moreso because of his middle age) (6) and says he takes the voyage in "pell-mell haste" (7) with little forethought to an itinerary (8). Dreiser emphasizes that he is spontaneous and unencumbered by preconceived ideas and agendas, suggesting that, as an adventurer, he intends to produce more than a mere travelogue. However, soon after the narrative opens, and frequently throughout, the lure of tourist spectacle influences Dreiser's portraits of European culture and compromises his adventurous intentions.

As in his later travel texts, Dreiser uses his gaze in *Traveler* to categorize, comprehend, and ultimately consume various groups and individuals that he encounters on his journey. For example, he defines European women by their ability to conform to a particular "look" or character, by their success or failure as specimens of different types: the actress, the prostitute, the diva, the good mother, or the country maiden. His characterization of these women ranges from the patronizing "delightful spectacle" of

an English mother dressed in "trig, close-fitting blue, outlining her form perfectly" and sitting with her little girl on a donkey (all in all "as charming a bit of womanhood and family sweetness" as he has ever seen [152–53]), to the exploitative treatment of Lilly, a prostitute he meets in front of a Piccadilly shop window. In a chapter titled "Lilly: A Girl of the Streets," a clear allusion to Stephen Crane's 1893 novel, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, Dreiser's ostensible purpose is to illuminate the lives of London prostitutes and offer some comparison with the "Broadway and the American type" (115). He attempts to do so by hiring Lilly not for sex, he claims, but merely for the chance to observe her.[6] To facilitate his behavioral study, Dreiser pays for a room in which he interviews her about her background and life. Later he takes her out to dinner and "aids" and "abets" vice by coaching her in American slang, which she believes will "raise her market value" (124). Though Dreiser attempts to personalize the issue of prostitution and even demonstrates his ability to perceive and sympathize with the grim reality of a prostitute's life (he notes that while there may be some "romance involved in these drabby liaisons for the average man . . . there is none . . . for the woman" [119]), he is frequently condescending and brutal with Lilly, accuses her of lying in order to goad her into revealing more about her background (117), and offhandedly remarks that even though Americans might have money they certainly "don't go round spending it on such as you. . . . You're not worth it" (118). He attempts to procure a reaction from her that will enhance the spectacular nature of her character in his narrative. He watches her closely, noting her facial expressions and the reactions registered in her "innocent" but "weak" eyes (113) to his various challenges. Dreiser narrates his encounter with Lilly through a series of picturesque vignettes that emphasize her emotional and psychological emptiness while focusing on her visual appeal. She is "pretty in the fresh English way," being a bedraggled "storm-blown soul" in a shabby blue suit, feather boa, and "pathetic hat" in front of the Piccadilly shop window (113–14); a "slim, graceful, shabby figure" exuding both pathos and bravado as she strikes a pose in the rented room (117); a sullen and insolent woman, unwilling to respond to his jibes (117–21); a servant helping him on and off with his coat (122); an eager disciple whose "simple memory" and "lips" he drills in American slang (124); and a fallen woman elevated by his attentions but doomed to a spectacular end in "disease, despair, [or] death" (127). Lilly is, as Dreiser himself concludes about prostitutes in general, one of the "shabbiest pawns in life, mere husks of beauty and living on husks" (117).

The fact that Dreiser hires Lilly for one night in order to manipulate and

study her behavior and eventually depict her picturesque tragedy in his travel narrative turns Lilly into a tragic and commodified art object and positions Dreiser squarely in the roles of sightseer and cultural consumer. Dreiser's interest in Lilly and London's fallen women parallels his fascination with the retail spectacle of Piccadilly, where he first meets Lilly; at the beginning of the chapter he confesses his "intense" interest in Piccadilly's "bright shop windows," containing "London's display of haberdashery and gold and silver ornaments" (113). Once he engages Lilly's services (and pays off her friend with a half crown [114]), Dreiser keeps careful track of what the evening costs: eight to ten pence for the cab (115), five shillings for the room (116), one shilling for a fire in the room (118), and three pounds for her time (126), half of what she claims is her highest wage (118). Dreiser certainly gets what he pays for, not only objectifying Lilly with his gaze but buying her time and image much as a tourist might buy an appealing item in a shop window[7] and then making her part of a commodity, the narrative that he intends to sell. Employing Donna Campbell's reading of the prostitute's role in naturalist writing, we might also conclude that Dreiser positions *Traveler*'s readers as "customers" who ask why such women sell themselves and pay (purchase the book) to find out (Campbell 114). Ultimately, however, Dreiser's aesthetic response to Lilly's circumstances denies readers (and himself) any real explanation for her circumstances. As he and Lilly part company, he promises to send her a copy of the book in which she will be immortalized, but any illumination of the social context to which she belongs is compromised by his objectification of her as an interesting spectacle and by his visualization of her dramatic and violent end (127).

Dreiser continues this characterization and consumption of unconventional women when he encounters the women of the "demi-monde" in Paris. In one sense, Dreiser's view of Paris nightlife seems fresh and authentic, perhaps even that of an adventurer. He notes that "if the romance of sex and beauty enthralls you, Europe in places presents tremendous possibilities," but to access these "ethereal paradises of charm" (212), means adopting an appropriate "attitude or mood," best exemplified by the "glitter" of youth or the "zest" and "curiosity" of a newcomer such as himself, through whom Barfleur wishes to recapture the excitement of Paris (213). Dreiser responds to the city's sheer physicality and atmosphere of sex; he senses this heady atmosphere "in the churches, the depots, the department stores, the theaters, the restaurants, the streets—a wild, keen desire for life with the blood and the body to back it up" (230–31). The "disease" of Paris is "like poison in the veins," and Dreiser feels himself "growing

positively giddy with enthusiasm" (231). In contrast, Barfleur is "essentially clean-minded" (241) and "has an innate horror of the purely physical when it descends to inartistic brutality" (242). When a man approaches them proffering vice, which Dreiser senses is particularly "arranged for the stranger" (242), Barfleur tries to shame the man by asking him if his mother knows what he is doing on the streets of Paris. Barfleur sends the man off muttering, "you don't want a guide. You want a church" (245), whereupon Dreiser exclaims, "You have preached enough. Let us see the worst that Paris has to show" (245). The friends' differences demonstrate that while the published travel text may construct Barfleur in a fashion that allows him to exercise some "managerial" control over Dreiser's travel (218), Dreiser's persona remains stimulated by this sexually-charged and visceral Paris nightlife in rather striking contrast to the Puritanical Dreiser of the "Lilly" chapter.

However, Dreiser's propensity for the visual again appears amidst his passionate engagement with Paris's spectacle of "amazing feminine beauty" (223), the appeal of which is derived in part from his previous reading about Paris (e.g. in the works of George Moore, Balzac, and Hugo), from Barfleur's descriptions of the restaurant scene, which have raised Dreiser's expectations to a level from which he cannot possibly see with "a realistic eye" (213), and from his tourist gaze, through which he designates sex as a more "significant attraction" than the Pantheon or the Louvre (220). Dreiser is most interested in the women who dominate the restaurant scene, and he observes that, in this "perfect maelstrom of sex," "the owners and managers of the more successful restaurants encourage and help to sustain a certain type of woman . . . [who] can rise in the café and restaurant world of Paris quite as she can on the stage" (221). He and Barfleur search for a famous example of this "exceptional Parisian type," a Mlle. Rillette, previously "one of the most interesting figures of the Folies stage," a "true artistic poison flower, . . . [a] lovely hooded cobra" (249), and now a central figure in the "stormy [restaurant] world of art and romance" (249). Finally, at four in the morning, they find Rillette in a club, dressed in a "nondescript costume" (251) but exuding "the chemical content which made her exceptional [and] was as obvious as though she were a bottle and bore a label" (252). Dreiser contemplates her depravity, which Barfleur has described, and notes that she appears, "in her idle security and profound nonchalance, like a figure out of the Revolution or the Commune" (252). "She would have been magnificent in a riot," notes Dreiser, "marching up a Parisian street, her white band about her brown hair, carrying a knife, a gun, or a flag" (252). Barfleur, too, appreciates her aesthetic potential. "Some one

[*sic*] should write a novel about a woman like that"; he suggests, "[s]he ought to be painted" (252). Dreiser does not speak to Rillette, yet her image lingers in his memory: "To this day she stands out in my mind in her simple dress and indifferent manner as perhaps the one forceful, significant figure that I saw in all the cafés of Paris or elsewhere" (252).

Dreiser's appraisal of the Paris café scene largely depends on such visual impressions, which shape his opinions about the depravity and artificiality of this "scorching world . . . [that] displayed vice as an upper and a nether millstone between which youth and beauty is ground or pressed quickly to a worthless mass." He imagines an ending for these demimondaines similar to Lilly's fate:

> so many . . . would sell their souls for one last hour of delight and then gladly take poison, as so many of them do, to end it all. Consumption, cocaine and opium maintain their persistent toll. This [the Montmartre district] is a furnace of desire . . . and it burns furiously with a hard, white-hot flame until there is nothing left save black cinders and white ashes. (254)

Dreiser resolves these women's social predicaments by picturing sensational and violent endings to their lives. Once these women fulfill the narrative role for which Dreiser seeks them out, that is to burn colorfully and brightly on *Traveler*'s pages, he essentially "writes them off"; effaced and consumed as "white ash," they literally do not survive beyond their vivid narrative representation.

In addition to spectacles of sexuality, Dreiser is also drawn to scenes of Europe's poor and working class. Dreiser compares the "two realms of poverty" with which he is familiar: London's East End and the New York East Side (129) he describes in some of his magazine writing. He is disappointed to find that London's slums are much more quiet, dull, and depressing than the "strident" slum districts of New York brimming with "crowds, color, noise, [and] life" (129). The poet John Masefield describes London's East End in a manner that suggests to Dreiser the thrilling "atmosphere of the Whitechapel murders" (128–29). However, after seeing the district for himself, he concludes that only a Dickens "guided by the lamp of genius" (131) could illuminate the East End's "dead level of sameness" (130) and "sad ugly mess" of life (131). In London's East End, Dreiser believes he may have stumbled upon some color in a public washhouse, laundry, and bath. Convinced that "these things are always fair indications of neighborhoods," he enters and asks for permission to "inspect" the place (131). In the public washhouse he observes the "muggy soul" of "the low English *au naturel*,"

to whom, he notes, no "passing commentary" could do justice; indeed, the scene requires a book "in order to present the fine differences" (132). Dreiser is not up to this task, and the visual scene in *Traveler* is washed-out and indistinct: scrubbing or ironing, the poor of the district wear "clothes the color of lead or darker" (132), have hair "gray or brownish-black, thin, [and] unkempt" (133), and appear "flabby and weary looking" (133). He works to make something of the scene but ultimately seems unable to produce a narrative for what he sees. The monochrome dullness of the spectacle, combined with a pervasive sense of "[w]eakness, lowness of spirit, [and] a vague comprehension of only the simplest things," gives Dreiser "the creeps" (132). Persistently, he returns another day and finds many Jews "bearing the marks of poverty and ignorance," but he looks in vain for "show places" ("saloons, moving pictures, etc.") or color of any kind, for the whole place is "sad, drab, [and] gray." After a third visit, Dreiser confers with another writer, "a reputed authority on the East End," who gives him a list of particular areas to "look at" (134). However, Dreiser cannot "see" anything exceptional in the appearance of the people, not even while observing a court proceeding (134–35). He seems to be looking for the mystery and romance promised in a newspaper article by Philip Gibbs, "The East End: Its Mystery and Romance," which Dreiser clips and saves in his travel diary. Gibbs describes the East End as a "mixture of races" that, he suggests, might "make the fortune of a playwright or novelist."[8] However, while Dreiser admits that "in such a dull, sordid, poor-bodied world any depth of filth or crime might be reached," he finds uninteresting the court cases of theft and adultery and, apparently discouraged by the lack of anything interesting to see, concludes, "who cares to know?" (135). The lack of color and spectacle affects his ability to produce any sort of response to these conditions besides a weary apathy.

In contrast, Dreiser's first glimpse of the small English country town of Marlowe brings back vivid memories of his first school reader and other books filled with pictures of "quaint little towns with birds flying above belfries and gabled roofs standing free in some clear, presumably golden air" (98), children playing, workers returning home, "[s]olid women" wearing "shawls and flat, shapeless wrecks of hats," and "tall shambling men" dressed in "queer long coats and high boots" (104). Marlowe's picture-perfect setting grips Dreiser with its literary beauty and pathos: "[i]t was as sweet as a lay out of Horace—as sad as Keats" (102). Yet the nostalgia and sentimentalism produced by the town's visual appeal complicate Dreiser's ability to move his narrative beyond his own personal concerns. The chief effect of his experience seems to be a heightened appreciation for his own

socioeconomic privileges. Looking into "low, dark doors where humble little tin and glass-bodied lamps were beginning to flicker," Dreiser remarks, "Thank God, my life is different from this" (102), demonstrating, as he notes later in *The Color of a Great City*, that poverty's "dramatic aspect" is most certainly "worth something [by way of comparison] to those who are not poor" (129). Furthermore, relying upon his experience with previous texts and images, Dreiser the tourist allows his preconceptions to overwhelm any real insight into the conditions of these people. As we observe in his enthusiasm for the crowds and color of New York's racially mixed East Side, he locates the mystery and romance of place in the picturesque rather than in the social. In *Traveler*, this same affinity for the picturesque leads him to "devour the strangeness and glamour of Eze [in Monte Carlo] as one very hungry would eat a meal" (284) or to wonder at the astonishing experience of crossing borders, such as the one between Italy and Switzerland, where, in a distance of only five or ten miles across an imaginary line, one encounters a new "race stock" (416) and finds that everything looks different: "people, dress, architecture, landscape, often soil and foliage" (415–16). This desire for visual spectacle overwhelms Dreiser's social vision, and he finally worries more over the lack of interesting and colorful sights in the East End or over Marlowe's resemblance to his childhood picture books than he does over the actual social conditions he hopes to comprehend.

Dreiser's experience in the manufacturing town of Stockport further illuminates the ways in which spectacle eclipses his cultural vision. Dreiser praises the aesthetic qualities of the mills: "a half-dozen immense mills with towering chimneys which, for architectural composition from the vantage point of the stream, could not have been surpassed." They have "the dignity of vast temples, housing a world of under-paid life which was nevertheless rich in color and enthusiasm" (184). Similarly, the mills of Oldham belie a world of "thought and feeling" which the intellectual are inclined to perceive as "dull and low." Dreiser claims that the mill workers "move [him] . . . at times as nothing else does. They have vast dignity—the throb and sob of the immense. And what is more dignified than toiling humanity, anyhow—its vague, formless, illusioned hopes and fears?" (185). Though this community seems in some respects as drab as London's dreary East End, Dreiser manages to locate and celebrate its color. He seems to suggest that some of this color results from a rather abstract dignity found in labor, yet his delight in finding in an Oldham store material evidence of labor's "illusioned hopes" in two pairs of slippers, one silver and one gold, a "sudden suggestion of romance in a dark workaday world" (185), exposes tourist culture's central role in his narrative. The image of the slippers func-

tions as souvenir (tourist artifact) and symbol (aesthetic object) of Oldham's color, and prompts Dreiser's supposition that in a city such as Oldham sex plays an integral role as a diversion more than it does "almost anywhere else" (186). Although the streets are "dull" and life "commonplace," Dreiser observes that "sex and the mysteries of temperament weave their spells quite effectively here as elsewhere, if not more" (186). He notices the glances and smiles exchanged between boys and girls who are "alert to be entertained by each other." Despite the lack of fashion and sophistication that one might find in New York or Paris, Oldham's "murky streets . . . burn with a rich passional life of their own . . . a sturdy vigor, keen if drab" (187).

Dreiser's interest in local color throughout the narrative raises interesting questions about the use of local color by naturalist writers. While Donna Campbell argues that the naturalists "critique," "rewrite," and finally "reject local color's self-imposed limitations of style, form and subject, and with them the 'feminine' values at the heart of the movement" (7), Dreiser consistently pursues local color in his travel narratives, perhaps subconsciously carrying on the local color tradition, itself a way of reconciling social contradictions arising from industrialization, urbanization, and modernization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The slippers' "color," which contrasts so vividly with the dullness of the social atmosphere, monopolizes Dreiser's attention as effectively as tourist pamphlets and guided tours. Though manufacturing England seems to provide more color than the drab spectacle of London's East End, Dreiser values scenes of both labor and poverty for the contrast they provide to spectacles of wealth (a contrast that he explicitly seeks, and finds, in his early magazine articles and sorely misses in his 1928 travel book *Dreiser Looks at Russia*) and for the narrative possibilities of "toiling humanity" and "illusioned hopes and fears." In the concluding chapter of *Dreiser Looks at Russia*, he observes that Communism provides a way to "remove the dreadful sense of social misery in one direction and another which has so afflicted me in my own life in America and ever since I have been old enough to know what social misery was" (252). Though Communism seems to supply the resolution to social misery in his Russian travel text, one wonders what Dreiser would have to look at or write about in America, Europe, or Russia without such misery, for the contrast and color of human suffering satisfies his desire for spectacle and fuels his travels and travel narratives.

Despite the powerful forward force provided by the visual, the narrative requirements of an ending finally obligate Dreiser to give closure to his journey and narrative. Peter Brooks notes that the construction of narrative

demonstrates "our stubborn insistence on making meaning in the world and in our lives" (323), and he argues that "we are able to read present moments—in literature and, by extension, in life—as endowed with narrative meaning only because we read them in anticipation of the structuring power of those endings that will retrospectively give them the order and significance of plot" (94). Brooks's reading of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* suggests that we consider the middle of a narrative as a "detour" (107): "a system of repetitions which are returns to and returns of, confounding the movement forward to the end with a movement back to origins" (108). Repetition signals a return "which ultimately subverts the very notion of beginning and end. . . . Any final authority claimed by narrative plots, whether of origin or end, is illusory" (109), Brooks contends, for a narrative wants, at the end, to "refer us back to its middle, to the web of the text" (110). Bartkowski, speaking of the endings of journeys and the design of travel narratives, suggests a similar kind of return: unlike native inhabitants, travelers choose their "place," "routes," and "questions," and in their travel texts "share the desire to make the writing of their displacement lead them to a re-shaped sense of self . . . [and] back to a new home" (101). Although the travel writer's retrospection and self-analysis may suggest a form of closure for both the journey and travel text, a re-shaped sense of home and self also refers back to the effects of the travel experience and represents a re-investment in the "web of the text" of the journey.

Dreiser senses that his journey is coming to an end on his first morning in Amsterdam when, noting that his "splendid world of adventure was all but ended," he reflects on the "wonder of the world's highways," which have taken him to "wonderful lands and objects" upon which he can no longer look "with fresh and wondering eyes," and he thinks of his return to New York to "write" about his experiences (496). Dreiser expresses relief on reaching New York, feeling not only grateful for safe passage (news reaches the ship, mid-voyage, of the Titanic's sinking along the route by which Dreiser and his shipmates will travel) but also glad finally to be home. Considering the perspective his trip has given him, he notes that life in one's own land "takes on a fresh and intimate aspect . . . after a trip abroad" (525), and he relishes his revitalized ability to see back on native soil. After disembarking, he takes a taxi to upper Broadway, charmed by the "suggestively rich" New York scene: "negroes . . . idling at curbs and corners, the Eighth Avenue type of shopkeeper lolling in his doorway, boys and girls, men and women of a none-too-comforting type, making the most of a humdrum and shabby existence" (525). He represents himself as something of a tourist in his own city, noting during a stroll down Broadway on

the evening of his return that "each sight and sound" at home is "significant" while those encountered abroad, because of a lack of familiarity, are "dangerous" (526) to generalize about. Dreiser's heightened appreciation for New York's charm in this closing chapter demonstrates the new sense of home and self that Bartkowski describes and at first glance might suggest closure for his journey and narrative. However, *Traveler*'s ending ultimately refers back to Brooks's "web of the text" and illustrates how the meaning of his journey depends upon the cultural vision sustained throughout the narrative's middle. If we really can identify a "Dreiserian self" in *Traveler*, as Bardeleben wants to in the diaries, then a significant aspect of that self appears not only in his passion for the Paris café scene but also in his investment in tourist culture and visual spectacle. We perceive this aspect of the Dreiserian self in *Traveler*'s concluding scene when Dreiser observes two young women while on an evening walk and records their conversation:

> "And he says to me," said one little girl, strolling with her picturesque companion on upper Broadway, "if you don't do that, I'm through."
>
> "And what did you say?"
>
> "Good *night!!!*"
>
> I was sure, then [concludes Dreiser], that I was really home! (526).

Though Dreiser questions the reliability of the tourist's perspective, and thus his own view of European culture, he ignores the implications of this question as he develops the visual and narrative appeal of this closing vignette, which functions as yet another colorful and pleasing spectacle. Rather than providing closure, the scene propels us back into the web of the text by perpetuating the cultural perspective and narrative strategy of the journey/text. As in the body of the travel narrative, Dreiser's imaginary or formal aesthetic solution to social questions or problems is to forgo resolution in favor of an endless detour through "unresolved" narrative portraits, thereby, as Brooks might suggest, prolonging his (and the reader's) narrative desire; the creation of more spectacle absolves him of the need to resolve important social questions. Dreiser does not discover anything new about European or American culture but finds and sustains in narrative the aesthetic image of life he has always imagined.

Notes

The author gratefully acknowledges permission to quote from the Theodore Dreiser Papers, University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

1. In his article, Sinclair Lewis also reviews Arnold Bennett's *Paris Nights: And Other Impressions of Places and People*, a non-chronological account of his travels in Paris, Italy, Switzerland, England, and the Riviera, and William Dean Howells's *Familiar Spanish Travels*. Bennett's descriptions are vivid and his imagery rich but do not appear to be mediated by tourist culture to the extent found in Dreiser's text. Bennett becomes a part of the city, living in a Paris flat and getting acquainted with his neighbors. He is not afraid to explore his impressions of Paris and to question and revise his interpretations. Bennett also displays a self-consciousness, not found in Dreiser, about the degree to which he romanticizes what he sees and even, as Lewis notes, "pokes fun at himself" and the Baedeker guidebooks and timetables which have "pronounced" certain scenes as "highly romantic and sacred." As Lewis also notes, perhaps part of the difference between Dreiser and Bennett can be attributed to Bennett's experience as a "slightly bored Englishman to whom Paris is too familiar not to be taken for granted." In *Familiar Spanish Travels*, Howells seems to rely more than Bennett on tourist culture (he values his guides and visits many important tourist sites) and is somewhat similar to Dreiser in his desire to capture visually the Spanish for his readers, and, especially near the beginning, in his attention to the previous texts upon which his preconceptions of travel in Spain are based, particularly his boyhood reading of *Don Quixote*; however, he notes that his "boyish vision" is radically different from the Spain he sees with his "every-day eyes" (11).

2. See Yoshinobu Hakutani (ed.), *Theodore Dreiser and American Culture: New Readings*; Clare Eby, *Dreiser and Veblen: Saboteurs of the Status Quo*; Miriam Gogol (ed.), *Theodore Dreiser: Beyond Naturalism*; and Renate von Bardeleben, "Dreiser's Diaristic Mode" and "From Travel Guide to Autobiography: Recovering the Original of *A Traveler at Forty*."

3. In his introduction to *Selected Magazine Articles of Theodore Dreiser*, Yoshinobu Hakutani addresses Dreiser's interest in visual culture. Hakutani observes that the subject of art and artists occupies the largest part of Dreiser's magazine articles and notes that Dreiser's interest in the visual arts is demonstrated by several of his works, including *A Traveler at Forty*, *A Hoosier Holiday*, and *The Color of a Great City* (18). Dreiser was particularly struck by William Louis Sonntag, Jr.'s "use of color" (22), and as a result of his association with Sonntag (which he writes about in his essay, "The Color of To-Day") "committed himself to capture an incisive vision of the contemporary scene." Ultimately, Hakutani suggests, "[t]he intensity and width of vision that Dreiser achieved as a commentator on art and artists was to

have a pervasive effect on his own writing as a novelist" (23). Clearly, this emphasis on the visual also influences his travel writing.

4. *Traveler* is not the first instance of such a cultural perspective. Many of Dreiser's early magazine pieces anticipate the touristic vision of culture found in both *Traveler* and *Hoosier Holiday*. For example, while observing the "picture-life" of laborers in "The Waterfront" (signed "Edward Al"), Dreiser imagines that these men of the docks must be "happier" for the aesthetic "framework" of their surroundings (633), the lines, textures, and contrasts of piers, boats, riggings, and water so finely wrought in art by Turner and Whistler (633–34). His characterization of the workers' picturesque lives denies them an awareness of their own oppression; he suggests that they most likely have "no comprehension of the position which they occupy in the affairs of the world. They know they are laborers and as such subject to every whim and fancy of their masters" (634). In "The Men in the Dark," published while he is in Europe, Dreiser's attraction to the artistic possibilities of misery becomes even clearer. Of the men who wait all night for a first look at the job listings in the next day's newspaper, Dreiser exclaims, "What a story! What a predicament!" (468), revealing the connections, for Dreiser, between spectacle and a good (salable) story. In this case, the men's predicament, illustrated by the "pitiful spectacle" of the waiting crowd (468), suggests a story, which Dreiser writes from the second person point of view of the spectator. "You look" and "begin speculating for yourself" in order to "piece the whole thing together," writes Dreiser (465). Drawing on the dialogue of the men and the advice of a knowledgeable bystander, Dreiser narrates the men's suffering, emphasizing through the viewpoint, description, and dialogue the experience of looking at the men but obscuring the deeper cultural narratives informing such suffering.

5. Dreiser's collection of postcards from this and other trips (including the New York to Indiana road trip of *A Hoosier Holiday* and the Russian trip of *Dreiser Looks at Russia*) is part of the Theodore Dreiser Papers at the University of Pennsylvania. Similar to his reliance on tourist culture in *Traveler,* Dreiser turns to postcard images during his 1915 automobile trip documented in *A Hoosier Holiday* to ascertain what there is of importance to see in an area and to interpret American culture.

6. Dreiser also demonstrates his willingness to pay for story material in his essay "The Sandwich Man," in *The Color of a Great City*, in which he holds out a half-dollar to a loiterer to see what the man will do. When the hungry man reaches out his "claw-like hand" to grab the coin, Dreiser observes that there is no thanks or acknowledgment, only a "physical, wholly animal determination to get it," and he quickly distributes more coins to observe their effect further (264).

7. In *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing, and Zola* (1985), Rachel Bowlby notes that the spectacles of a burgeoning consumer culture in *Sister*

Carrie similarly complicate subjectivity: "Image and illusion are from the start constitutive of how things appear, of what goes to make up a human subject, and of what he or she apprehends as real" (65).

8. Gibbs's article (dated Tuesday, January 2, 1912) is clipped from an unidentified newspaper and is missing a page number.

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Dreiser's Private Library

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Over his lifetime, Theodore Dreiser amassed a library of more than 1,900 volumes, excluding works that he wrote himself. In 1949, the University of Pennsylvania purchased Dreiser's manuscripts and a majority of his books from Helen Dreiser for $16,500, and in 1958, the remainder of the library arrived in several shipments as gifts from Helen's estate. This book collection shows Dreiser as a bibliophile, a book collector who knew the value of first editions and who actively sought autographed volumes from other authors. For example, on March 16, 1942, Dreiser wrote to George Ade:

> It's so very exceptionally nice of you to reward my inquiry as to where I might find a copy of *Artie* with a copy of the book itself. If I had known I was to be so favored I would have stepped in with the autograph hunters' customary gall and asked you to sign it. (*Letters* 3: 949)

Hoping Ade would send him an autographed copy of *Artie*, Dreiser ends the letter with a grievous lament that the two writers did not know each other better. In correspondence with authors that he knew well, such as H. L. Mencken and Charles Fort, Dreiser regularly offered to exchange autographed volumes as he does in a letter to Mencken dated December 6, 1909: "I have received *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*, by one H. L. Mencken, and the book of poems from the press of Thomas B. Mosher, both duly inscribed" (*D-M Letters* 1: 41). But Dreiser also requested books from authors and publishers whom he did not know. And despite his tendency towards parsimony, Dreiser spent money throughout his life to collect, store, and catalogue these works—he was a good librarian.

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The formal creation of Dreiser's library can be dated to 1909 when, after financial success as an editor and after a reissue of *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser asked Franklin Booth to design a bookplate (see fig. 1). As a newspaper and advertising illustrator, Booth worked with Dreiser on the *New York Daily News* Sunday supplement, and Booth later collaborated with Dreiser to create and illustrate *A Hoosier Holiday* (Swanberg 228). The bookplate is a unique artwork that simply names Dreiser's library "Theodore Dreiser, Ex Libris," but the illustration is not simple—it depicts a pastoral scene in which cramped humanity buried underground supplies the compost from which trees and books rise. The focal point of the image is an ink well and pen, and these objects are the literary implements that transform human thought into enduring culture. That Dreiser asked Booth to create this elaborate bookplate and that Dreiser placed it in his books is evidence that his collection mattered, but the value he placed on his books is also demonstrated by the care with which he cataloged and stored the library.

Bills from Manhattan Storage and Warehouse that are now part of the Dreiser Collection indicate that Dreiser rented storage space for his books from 1914 to 1938 (file 3647). From 1910 to 1914, Dreiser lived intermittently with his wife Sara and used his New York apartment at 3609 Broadway "as a convenient hotel and mailing address" where he could store his belongings (Swanberg 175). But after 1914, Dreiser separated permanently from his wife and moved into a small apartment at 165 W. 10th Street in Greenwich Village, which forced him to store his books. During the 1930s when Dreiser focused almost exclusively on the writing of nonfiction, his library was of greater importance, and he regularly moved books in and out of Manhattan Storage. First, to save money, Dreiser stored books at Iroki, his country home at Mt. Kisco, N.Y., as Helen Dreiser reports in her memoir *My Life with Dreiser*: "we had moved a large part of everything, including paintings, books, literary materials, furniture, dishes" (214). As Dreiser spent more time at Iroki writing, he required more books, and Helen writes that his secretary Evelyn Light came to Iroki to assist Dreiser and "to arrange his reference library" (232). From book lists Light prepared in 1932, 1933, and 1934, it is evident that Dreiser moved books from the Manhattan storage to the Hotel Ansonia and to Iroki, and these lists point to his growing concern with documenting his collection (files 13818 and 13819). On May 6, 1932, there is a record indicating that trunks 13 and 14 were shipped to Light at the Hotel Ansonia where Dreiser had a suite and where Light had an office (files 3647–3649). In a 1932 note, Light writes that "Trunk 3," containing Dreiser's Library of American Realism, is in Manhattan Storage, but this trunk is later moved to Iroki, then to Los Angeles, and then to Ore-

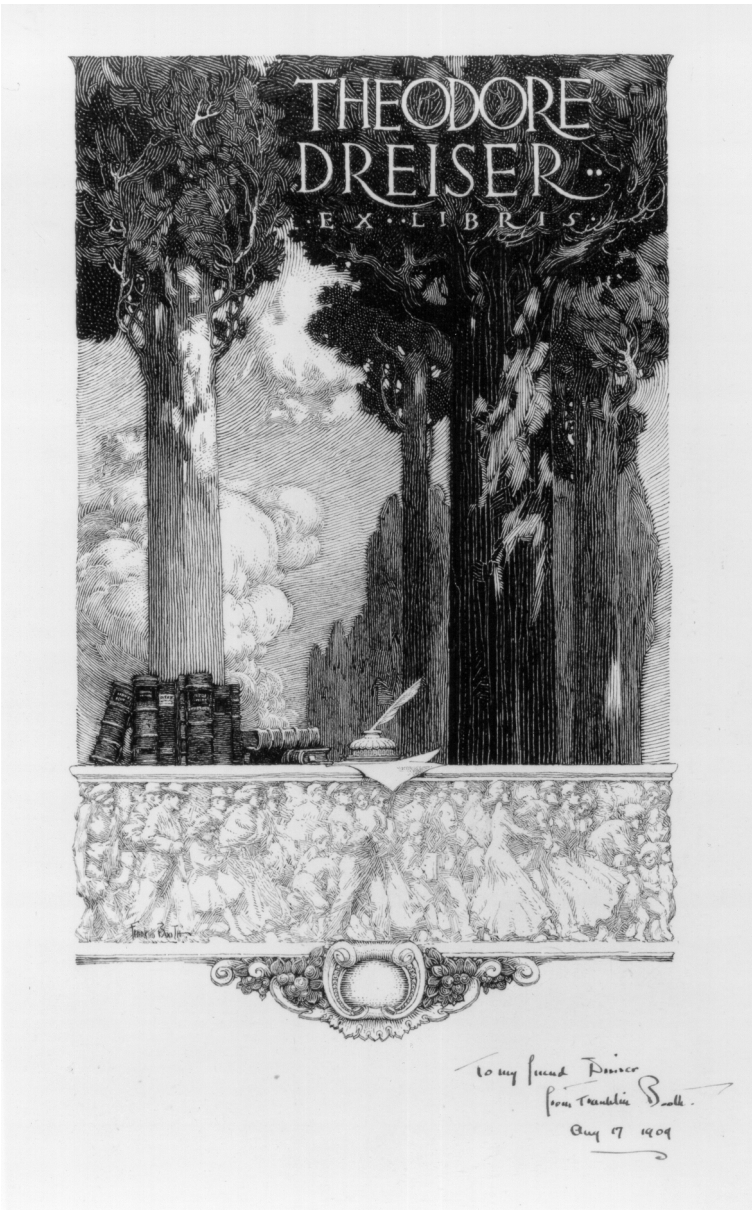


FIG. 1. Dreiser's bookplate, created by Franklin Booth (1909). Courtesy of the Theodore Dreiser Papers, University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

gon (file 13820). Another list specifies that Dreiser's autographed books are at Mt. Kisco in a large wooden box marked "A.B.," but these books would also move several times before arriving at the University of Pennsylvania.

During the 1930s, Evelyn Light and Harriet Bissell had Dreiser's proxy and could move books in and out of storage, but after 1938, all of Dreiser's books were shipped to Iroki, and in early 1941, the library moved west to Los Angeles, as reported by Helen: "three large vanloads of furniture, literary materials and the Dreiser library arrived from Iroki to find lodging in their new surroundings. A moisture-proof storeroom was already under construction" (276). As mentioned above, four years after Dreiser's death, Helen Dreiser signed a contract with the University of Pennsylvania, and the majority of Dreiser's books were shipped from Los Angeles to Philadelphia, arriving in September 1949. The contract indicates that the large box labeled "A.B." and another box containing the Library of American Realism were in Gresham, Oregon (at Helen's sister's home), and that these books would not ship until later in the summer. But acquisition lists at the University of Pennsylvania indicate that over four hundred books in Helen's possession were not shipped until 1958, three years after her death. These final books, a gift from Helen's estate, arrived from Gresham, Oregon, and Los Angeles, where Harold Dies, a relative of both Helen and Theodore, controlled what remained of Dreiser's library. These factors may help to explain why some books are no longer part of the collection.

At present, the University of Pennsylvania has Dreiser's library arranged according to when the books were received, and the acquisition lists that were prepared when the different shipments arrived in Philadelphia offer the best catalogue of the collection. Finding a particular book, however, can be difficult. After briefly scanning Dreiser's library, one immediately notices that it is as large and eclectic as Dreiser himself, containing non-fiction works on most topics, as well as classical literature, popular and serious fiction, poetry, and drama. Moreover, a number of books and authors are likely to be unfamiliar to present-day readers, for the library represents the literary world in which Dreiser was both scholar and critic and which was inhabited by well-known authors such as Eugene O'Neill and James Joyce as well as numerous writers who are now seldom read or discussed. For example, within Dreiser's library is a collection of books that Dreiser labeled the "Library of American Realism," but few of these authors are now read or taught and few can be identified in standard reference works, such as *The Concise Oxford Companion to American Literature*. Besides capturing the literary world of the early twentieth century, the library also reveals Dreiser's desire to define American realism.

For Dreiser, his Library of American Realism was a collection of more than 100 books that represented the best of American literature, a collection that he began early and that he augmented regularly (see appendix 1). With his private library, Dreiser attempted to define and shape the American canon. On March 16, 1942, Dreiser refers to his Library of American Realism in the above-mentioned letter to George Ade:

> As early as 1900, or before, it [*Artie*] passed into my collection of genuine American realism—a picture of the smart engaging amusing youngster of the "gay nineties," with all of his wit and self-confidence. In fact, I entered it with your *Fables in Slang*, Finley Dunne's *Philosopher Dooley*, Frank Norris' *McTeague*, and Hamlin Garland's *Main-Travelled Roads*. And I stored it—or thought I had—along with these and a very few others of that time or earlier:—Howells' *Their Wedding Journey*, for example. These were the beginning of my private library of American Realism. (*Letters* 3: 949)

This letter reveals both Dreiser's desire to collect autographed first editions and his ambition to create a library of great works. In Dreiser's copy of Hamlin Garland's *Main-Travelled Roads*, Garland inscribed the phrase: "Theodore Dreiser's Library of Realism," which shows that Dreiser contacted Garland, just as he contacted George Ade, and requested an autographed book for his realism library. In a note that records the movement of books in and out of Dreiser's New York storage, Evelyn Light writes that she is adding Sara Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and Edgar Lee Masters's *Mirage* to the storage box titled "Library of American Realism," and she speculates that these books are replacements, not duplicates, since the works are on Dreiser's list but not already in the box. What Light does not realize is that the books were being added to the library as Dreiser was able to secure them from authors. In some cases, Dreiser probably never owned the books, but in other cases, as in the case of Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and Masters's *Mirage*, we have evidence that Dreiser owned the books, yet these books are not in the collection at the University of Pennsylvania.

In the above letter to Ade, Dreiser probably exaggerates when he claims that he began the Library of American Realism before 1900, but there is evidence that he carefully planned, collected, and changed this realism library over a thirty-year period. In a letter to H. L. Mencken on March 22, 1915, Dreiser wrote, "Barring Howells, James, Norris, Phillips, Mrs. Wharton, Garland, Herrick and London, are there any fugitive realistic works of

import. I want a list. I would exclude Whitlock, H. B. Fuller and Stephen Crane. . . . Make it as comprehensive a list as you can" (*D-M Letters* 1: 190). Three days later, on March 25, Mencken replied to list Upton Sinclair's *Love's Pilgrimage* and *The Jungle*, Frederic Arnold Kummer's *A Song of Sixpence*, Winston Churchill's *The Inside of the Cup*, Mark Twain's and Charles Dudley Warner's *The Gilded Age*, and Robert Steele's *One Man* (*D-M Letters* 1: 191). Dreiser wrote again on March 29, 1915, to ask whether Harry Leon Wilson, Will Levington Comfort, Alice Brown, Mary E. Wilkins, or Margaret Deland wrote any sound works "realistically speaking" (*D-M Letters* 1: 191), but none of these authors appear on Dreiser's list of American realism, even though Dreiser owned books by Harry Wilson and Will Comfort.

During the 1930s, Dreiser employed his Library of American Realism as evidence that American writers were finally writing a realistic literature that represents society, not just the individual. In 1932, Dreiser's desire to convey his views on literature, politics, and the economy overwhelmed his fear of public speaking: as W. A. Swanberg explains, "determination to conquer his terrible stage fright was proof of his longing for leadership" (394). And in 1934, Dreiser wished to enhance his income further with more lecturing, so he "quit the Pond [lecture] bureau and signed up with Ernest Briggs, insisting on a $500 fee and on dignified promotion cards rather than the usual handbills" (Swanberg 420). In a lecture entitled "The Realist and His Sources," dated April 17, 1935, Dreiser argues that the realistic writer must suffer as Dostoyevsky, Dickens, and Hamsen suffered, and then he laments the lack of American realism: "Here in American we have no really distinguished list of realists to whom to point. I would like to mention Mark Twain as a great realist, but the trouble in that case is that he was also a great humorist, not an ironic, but a kindly humorist" (file 13368). In lecture notes entitled "Realism and Other Literature," Dreiser laments that too much literature is based on action instead of reaction—he then begins a list of 100 realistic novels, but only catalogues 56 (file 13701). He includes a number of early American works, such as *Charlotte Temple*, by Susanna Rowson (labeling it the "first piece of American realism"); *Arthur Mervyn*, by Charles Brockton Brown; *Typee*, *Mardi*, *Pierre*, and *Billy Budd*, by Melville; *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac*, by Thoreau; *The Scarlet Letter*, by Hawthorne; *Leaves of Grass*, by Whitman; and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Stowe. Unlike this list, Dreiser's Library of American Realism contains over 100 books and, with the exception of Melville's *Typee* and Stowe's *Dred*, excludes early works. In place of these early American novels, Dreiser includes contemporary works by Faulkner, Hemingway, and Stein-

beck, which demonstrates that the collection reflected Dreiser's sense of an evolving American canon.

Not only was Dreiser concerned with realism in America, but he also collected and catalogued foreign realists. In the Dreiser Collection, there are lecture notes that list "Great Foreign Realists," including Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Hugo, Balzac, De Maupassant, Flaubert, Thackerary, Gogol, Defoe, Hardy, George Moore, Chekhov, Conrad, Joyce, James, and Wharton (file 13386). Dreiser includes James and Wharton among the "Great Foreign Realists," but both are also on his list of American realists. For Dreiser, his library was more than a collection of valuable books; it was a means by which he could physically select, arrange, and define the American canon. Despite his condemnation of American literature as lacking great realists, he proceeds, in his literary speeches, to list modern American writers who portend an American renaissance. In notes for a 1936 lecture titled "Are Writers Born?" Dreiser lists living writers together with their states, which suggests that he perceived realism to be in part an outgrowth of region, and these writers—William Saroyan, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and Thomas Wolfe—appear in his Library of American Realism (file 13373). And in Paris on July 25, 1938, Dreiser delivered a speech to the International Association of Writers that further articulates his vision of American literature: "the great writers have almost uniformly struggled to express in the novel form the ills of man," and the best American literature until recently has been too concerned with "individual or emotional problems," not societal problems (file 13379). First citing Poe, Melville, and Hawthorne as examples of the great American writers concerned with the individual, Dreiser then lists the American authors who focus on societal issues in their writing: Twain, Crane, Fuller, Ade, Sinclair, Cather, Anderson, Lewis, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner, all writers who appear in Dreiser's Library of American Realism. These speeches reveal Dreiser's realism library as a physical means by which he defined American literature, which is further corroborated by the contract signed by Helen Dreiser and the University of Pennsylvania.

In listing the contents to be shipped, the contract describes Dreiser's Library of American Realism as a group of books that Dreiser planned to analyze further: "There is his library of American Realism about which he intended to write" (file 6961). But only forty of the books listed as part of the Library of American Realism ever arrived at the University of Pennsylvania, and sixteen of those forty books did not turn up until 1958, three years after Helen Dreiser's death. The Library of American Realism was stored in trunk 3, and at the top of what appears to be the most current con-

tent list, there is a handwritten note, "Check these books in shipment," which leads one to assume that most of the 119 books listed are in the trunk. The absence of so many books is odd, and there is evidence, as mentioned above, that Dreiser owned some of the missing books. For example, Dreiser owned sixteen books by Edgar Lee Masters (four of which are inscribed to Dreiser by Masters) and all are in the Pennsylvania collection, but the one book that Dreiser listed as belonging to his Library of American Realism, *Mirage*, did not arrive in Philadelphia, even though Evelyn Light wrote a note stating that she added the book to the trunk.

Besides showing Dreiser as a collector of books and a shaper of the canon, his private library reveals the authors that he admired. (The full list of books is posted on-line at the DreiserWebSource <http://www.library.upenn.edu/special/dreiser/>.) When looking at the larger collection, one might wonder which authors are best represented and which authors appear most often in Dreiser's library. At the top of the list is Upton Sinclair. Dreiser owned twenty-nine books by Sinclair—six more than by any other author. He owned twenty-three by John Powys, twenty-two by Eugene O'Neill, nineteen by Sherwood Anderson, eighteen each by Charles Fort and H. L. Mencken, sixteen by Edgar Lee Masters, twelve each by Emile Zola and Frank Norris, eleven by George Sterling, ten each by Barrett Clark and H. G. Wells, nine each by Knut Hamsun and Sarah Millin, eight by William Woodward, George Ade, and Hendrick Van Loon, seven by Leon Trotsky, Gustavus Myers and Arthur Train, and six by Robinson Jeffers. And although he listed works by William Dean Howells and Henry James as belonging in his Library of American Realism, works by these authors did not arrive in Philadelphia. Dreiser owned three books by Mark Twain, but *Huckleberry Finn* is not in the collection, a novel that is also listed in his Library of American Realism.

As Dreiser's letters, critics, and biographers reveal, we know that Dreiser loved reading Charles Fort's pseudo-scientific studies, H. G. Wells's science fiction, and John Powys's transcendental philosophy, so it is no surprise that he owned a large number of their books. But why he owned twenty-two volumes by Eugene O'Neill and ten by Barrett Clark, who was a drama critic and who wrote a book about Eugene O'Neill, is less certain, but these books remind us that Dreiser was a playwright who studied modern American drama. That he owned nine books by Sarah Millin, a South-African novelist, and none by Henry James or W. D. Howells, may be a mystery, but this also reveals Dreiser's eclectic, independent reading habits. Since Dreiser did own a number of books that he received as gifts and that he never read, judging Dreiser's reading habits by his book owner-

ship can be misleading. For example, the crate labeled "A.B." contains valuable, autographed first editions, but many of these works remain unread, unopened, with the pages uncut, and a surprising number are in foreign languages, such as Russian and French, languages that Dreiser could not read.

Of the books in the collection, the ones containing marginalia best reveal Dreiser's reading patterns and his varied intellectual interests (see appendix 2). As early as 1896 in a "Reflections" column for *Ev'ry Month*, Dreiser outlined his approach to reading, one that he followed throughout his life. In the column, he argues that we should not begin with the classics of Greece and Rome, nor old masters, nor Shakespeare nor Milton, nor romances, nor clever novels; instead, we should begin with non-fiction, with "some light, readable works on astronomy, botany, chemistry, physics, and so forth . . . gather from them a little knowledge of the flowers and plants, the rocks and minerals and their qualities, and the position of the earth" (86). After educating ourselves, we may then turn to novels and differentiate good fiction from bad. Throughout his life, Dreiser followed his own advice. There are 117 books that contain marginalia and all are nonfiction, except Melville's *Typee*. And the marking in *Typee* indicates that Dreiser focused on the biographical introduction, not the novel. Of his annotated books, religious and philosophical works comprise the largest number, but they range greatly in subject matter, from Hinduism to Schopenhauer to works by Quakers. Even at the end of his life, Dreiser was reading to learn. In December 1945, on the inside cover of Dreiser's copy of Paul Bunton's *A Search in Secret India*, Helen Dreiser wrote that Dreiser was reading and marking this volume "a few days before passing away." In 1944, when she visited Dreiser in Los Angeles, Marguerite Tjader found Dreiser surrounded by his books: "All around were bookcases with dictionaries, and many scientific books and magazines, and manuscripts; the whole room seemed alive with information and ideas" (149).

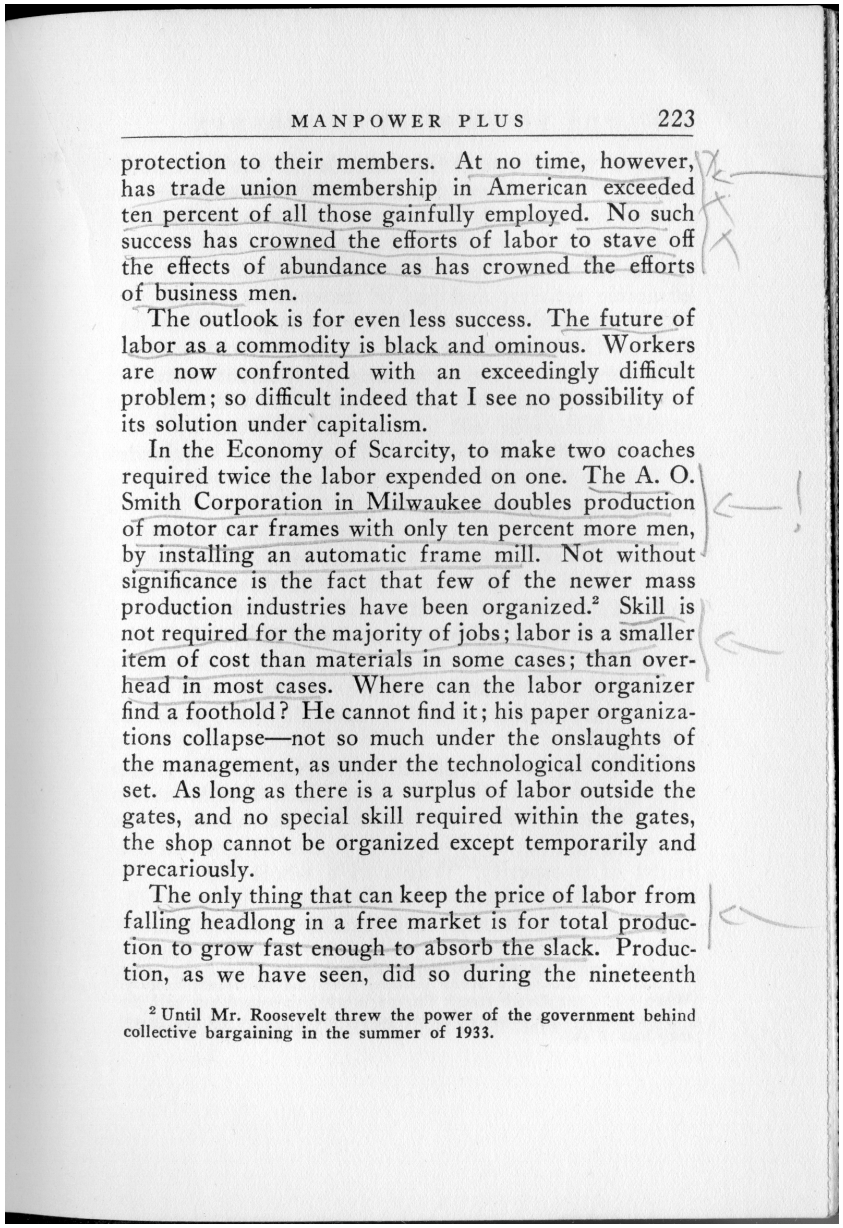
If we are to measure the ideas that influenced Dreiser by looking at the books that he marked, then Quakerism ranks first. He owned and wrote in at least eight books on, about, or by Quakers, including *The History, Beliefs, Practices of Friends*, *Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of Members of the Religious Society of Friends*, *A History of the Friends in America*, *The Journal of John Woolman*, George Fox's *Journal*, and three Quaker books by Rufus Jones. And even in the volume *Hinduism: The World-Ideal*, by Maitra Harendranath, next to a line that states "Hindus are the only ones to see God in all human activity," Dreiser wrote "Quakers." That he read Quaker works as research for *The Bulwark* is obvious, but the amount of

reading that he did and the care with which he read this material demonstrates that Quaker writings moved Dreiser towards his ultimate goal: knowledge of the unknowable.

Besides these religious works, Dreiser read and annotated books on almost every topic, from economics to sex, from science to literature, and from history to psychology. In general, the books with marginalia fall into seven categories: economics, literary criticism, philosophy, politics, psychology, religion, and science. While his varied intellectual interests are well known, the library offers proof that Dreiser's philosophical and scientific musings were based on extensive reading. In *The Inevitable Equation: The Antithetic Pattern of Theodore Dreiser's Thought and Art*, Rolf Lundén argues that Dreiser would read "anyone who moved him closer to the truth" (35). In 1894, Dreiser began his search for the truth by reading Spencer and Huxley, and he continued his eclectic search for knowledge by reading Charles Fort, Sigmund Freud, John Powys, H. G. Wells, Mary Baker Eddy, John Woolman, John Watson, A. A. Brill, and Jacques Loeb.

In the 117 books with marginalia, Dreiser was far more likely to underline passages than to write in the margins, and only about half of these books contain extensive marking. Dreiser marked books by underlining passages, running a line beside the text, and/or placing X's, exclamation marks, and arrows in the margins (see fig. 2). In books with extensive markings, there is a combination of these marks, apparently indicating the significance of the passage. The lack of marking in most books may seem odd since Dreiser, especially in preparing his *Notes on Life*, borrowed extensively from other writers. Instead of marking books, Dreiser often prepared notes or had notes prepared, as Neda Westlake explains in "Theodore Dreiser's *Notes on Life*." Of the thirty-one books that Westlake lists as being quoted extensively in *Notes on Life*, only six are among the books containing marginalia and a majority of the thirty-one books are not in the Dreiser collection at the University of Pennsylvania, which indicates that Dreiser borrowed from libraries and/or that books are missing.

As mentioned above, the extent to which Dreiser marked books varied greatly. For example, in Glenn Plumb's *Industrial Democracy* only one page is slightly marked, but Gustavus Myers's five books are extensively marked. To Gustavus Myers, Dreiser wrote on March 31, 1916, "Quite recently I sat down and went through four of your volumes on American Wealth—*Great Fortunes in America*—three volumes—and *Canadian Wealth* one. Before that I had read your *History of Tammany Hall*. I may express myself lamely in this matter but to me these are very important books—the first honest, intelligible and intelligent explanation and proof of



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protection to their members. At no time, however, has trade union membership in American exceeded ten percent of all those gainfully employed. No such success has crowned the efforts of labor to stave off the effects of abundance as has crowned the efforts of business men.

The outlook is for even less success. The future of labor as a commodity is black and ominous. Workers are now confronted with an exceedingly difficult problem; so difficult indeed that I see no possibility of its solution under capitalism.

In the Economy of Scarcity, to make two coaches required twice the labor expended on one. The A. O. Smith Corporation in Milwaukee doubles production of motor car frames with only ten percent more men, by installing an automatic frame mill. Not without significance is the fact that few of the newer mass production industries have been organized.[2] Skill is not required for the majority of jobs; labor is a smaller item of cost than materials in some cases; than overhead in most cases. Where can the labor organizer find a foothold? He cannot find it; his paper organizations collapse—not so much under the onslaughts of the management, as under the technological conditions set. As long as there is a surplus of labor outside the gates, and no special skill required within the gates, the shop cannot be organized except temporarily and precariously.

The only thing that can keep the price of labor from falling headlong in a free market is for total production to grow fast enough to absorb the slack. Production, as we have seen, did so during the nineteenth

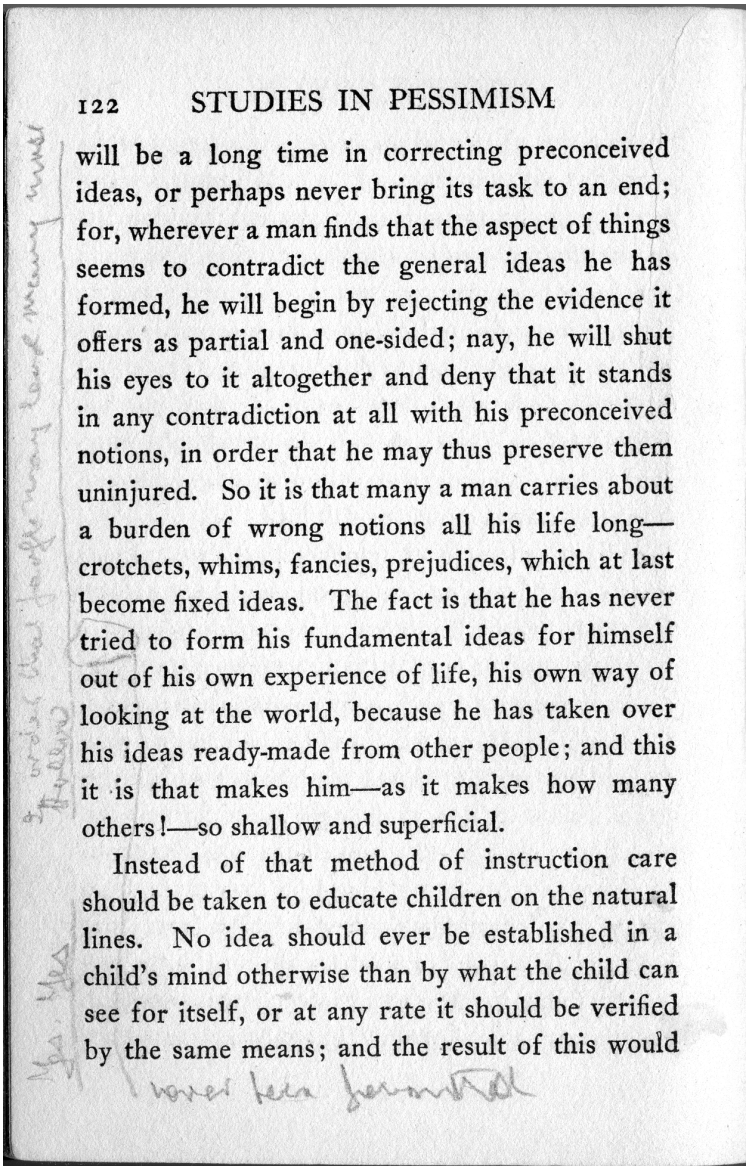
[2] Until Mr. Roosevelt threw the power of the government behind collective bargaining in the summer of 1933.

FIG. 2. Examples of Dreiser's marking. From *The Economy of Abundance*, by Stuart Chase (New York: Macmillan, 1934); item 49D–248. Courtesy of the Theodore Dreiser Papers, University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

how great fortunes are, unusually, made" (*Letters* 1: 208–9). As judged by the underlining and marginalia that appear throughout Myers's books, Dreiser's admiration of the author is genuine. But the type and purpose of Dreiser's markings varied greatly. In a work that attacks Catholicism by Saxby Penfold entitled *Why a Roman Catholic Cannot Be President of the United States*, Dreiser inserted a two-page note, indicating that the author's argument goes too far. In Melville's *Typee*, the only work of fiction to contain marginalia, Dreiser marks lightly throughout the work, but he is particularly interested in the introduction where he notes Melville's age when writing various works. In Theodore Reik's *Psychology of Sex Relations*, in an attempt to distance herself from the marginalia, Helen Dreiser writes that Theodore Dreiser marked the book. But Dreiser only marked the beginning of Reik's book, and the marginalia indicates that he focused on the nature of the sex drive and the confusion of sex and love. In other works, Dreiser simply admires an author; for example, on the dedication page of Llewelyn Powys's book *Love and Death*, Dreiser wrote: "This book is beautiful in wisdom, narrative poetry and truth. A book I truly love. T.D."

In his few marginal comments, Dreiser would typically qualify, contradict, or emphasize passages of the text. For example, in *The Economy of Abundance* Stuart Chase analyzes our modern economic structure and claims that we cannot go "back to the land"; in response, Dreiser writes, "no good to go back to the land." In a small popular version of Schopenhauer entitled *Studies in Pessimism*, Dreiser writes throughout, underlining passages about women that claim men are nobler than women because men reach the age of reason at twenty and women reach it at eighteen. Beside Schopenhauer's claim that the child should learn through experience and not through preconceived ideas, Dreiser writes, "Yes. Yes" (fig. 3). But in response to Schopenhauer's claim that this method of education has never been tried, Dreiser circles the word "tried" and writes, "never been permitted," qualifying Schopenhauer's claim. In reaction to this same passage, Dreiser writes, "In order that people may lead many must follow." In this longer comment, Dreiser is challenging Schopenhauer's philosophy, which is clear on the next page where Schopenhauer outlines his plans for children to learn from the "original" and not from "copies." In marginal comments, Dreiser contradicts Schopenhauer by writing: "But life does not work so" and "But they [children] are not capable of learning for the original" (122–23). Although Dreiser's marginal comments are rare, they demonstrate his independent and iconoclastic thinking.

But Dreiser's eclectic reading and ideas were often misunderstood. For example, Dreiser's appreciation and promotion of Charles Fort, a collector



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will be a long time in correcting preconceived ideas, or perhaps never bring its task to an end; for, wherever a man finds that the aspect of things seems to contradict the general ideas he has formed, he will begin by rejecting the evidence it offers as partial and one-sided; nay, he will shut his eyes to it altogether and deny that it stands in any contradiction at all with his preconceived notions, in order that he may thus preserve them uninjured. So it is that many a man carries about a burden of wrong notions all his life long—crotchets, whims, fancies, prejudices, which at last become fixed ideas. The fact is that he has never tried to form his fundamental ideas for himself out of his own experience of life, his own way of looking at the world, because he has taken over his ideas ready-made from other people; and this it is that makes him—as it makes how many others!—so shallow and superficial.

Instead of that method of instruction care should be taken to educate children on the natural lines. No idea should ever be established in a child's mind otherwise than by what the child can see for itself, or at any rate it should be verified by the same means; and the result of this would

FIG 3. Dreiser's marginalia. From *Studies in Pessimism*, by Arthur Schopenhauer, (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1912); item 58D–305. Courtesy of the Theodore Dreiser Papers, University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

be that the child's ideas, if few, would be well-grounded and accurate. It would learn how to measure things by its own standard rather than by another's; and so it would escape a thousand strange fancies and prejudices, and not need to have them eradicated by the lessons it will subsequently be taught in the school of life. The child would, in this way, have its mind once for all habituated to clear views and thorough-going knowledge: it would use its own judgment and take an unbiased estimate of things.

And, in general, children should not form their notions of what life is like from the copy before they have learned it from the original, to whatever aspect of it their attention may be directed. Instead, therefore, of hastening to place *books,* and books alone, in their hands, let them be made acquainted, step by step, with *things*—with the actual circumstances of human life. And above all let care be taken to bring them to a clear and objective view of the world as it is, to educate them always to derive their ideas directly from real life, and to shape them in conformity with it—not to fetch them from other sources, such as books, fairy tales, or what people say, and then

of bizarre and supernatural data, was taken by some as a sign of intellectual weakness or muddled thinking. When Dreiser sent his personal copy of Fort's *Book of the Damned* to H. G. Wells, Wells returned the book admonishing Dreiser to stop criticizing "orthodox science," and Wells requested God to "dissolve (& forgive)" Dreiser's Fortean society (*Letters* 2: 532). Dreiser responded to H. G. Wells on May 23, 1931:

> In regard to Fort's work, I am still of the opinion that such a body of ideas, notions, reports, hallucinations—anything you will—gathered from whatever sources and arranged as strangely and, certainly I can say in this case, imaginatively, is worth any mind's attention. I think it is arresting just as pure imagination, as Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand League Under the Sea*, or your own *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is arresting. (*Letters* 2: 532)

Dreiser greatly admired Fort's method of collecting and synthesizing data ignored by scientists, but Dreiser read Fort's books for entertainment and mental stimulation, not for factual information—only one Fortean work (*Wild Talents*) contains any marginalia and those markings are slight. Dreiser's fascination with Fort and with reading non-fictional works emanated from one desire, the attainment of truth. If nothing else, Dreiser's private library shows him to be a seeker of knowledge who would use any means at his disposal to reach beyond the limits of traditional thinking if he were to know the unknowable.[1]

Note

1. I wish to thank Nancy Shawcross, Lynne Farrington, John Pollack, and the special collections staff of the University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library for making Dreiser's library available. Permission to quote unpublished manuscripts has been granted by the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania Library. The file numbers listed after items from the Dreiser Collection indicate the location of the item. In addition, I wish to thank Keith Newlin and Steve Brennan for their expert editing and for their numerous suggestions, additions, and corrections.

EDITORS' NOTE: This essay, the two appendices, and the full list of books in Dreiser's library are posted on-line at the University of Pennsylvania's DreiserWebSource, <http://www.library.upenn.edu/special/dreiser/>.

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Appendix 1
Dreiser's Library of American Realism

Since this version of Dreiser's Library of American Realism contains John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, the list was created sometime after 1937 when the novella was published. Of the books listed below, the ones with full publication information and an acquisition number are in the Dreiser Collection at the University of Pennsylvania. The acquisition numbers beginning with "49D–" or "58D–" are used by the library to identify the books, and these numbers indicate the year that the books arrived (1949 or 1958). The books that have only a publication date in parentheses are not in Dreiser's library, but there is evidence, as discussed above, that during his life, Dreiser owned books that were never shipped to the University of Pennsylvania.

Adams, Henry. *The Education of Henry Adams*. (1907)
Adams, Samuel H. *Revelry*. (1926)
Ade, George. *Fables in Slang*. (1899)
Anderson, Sherwood. *Dark Laughter*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1925. (49D–36)
Anonymous. *My Actor-Husband*. (1912)
Bercovici, Konrad. *Crimes of Charity*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1917. (49D–108)
Black, Jack. *You Can't Win*. (1926)
Bronson-Howard, George. Selected stories. [no specific title listed]
Boyce, Neith. *The Eternal Spring*. New York: Fox, Duffield and Company, 1906. (49D–150)
Boyd, Thomas. *Through the Wheat*. (1923)
Bullen, Frank. *Cruise of the Cachalot*. (1899)
Bullitt, William. *It's Not Done*. (1928)
Canfield, C. L. *The Diary of a Forty-Niner*. (1920)
Carlisle, Helen Grace. *Mother's Cry*. (1930)
Cather, Willa. *My Antonia*. London: William Heinemann, 1919. (58D–121)
Cahan, Abraham. *The Rise of David Levinsky*. (1917)
Chambers, Robert W. *The King in Yellow*. (1895)
Cohen, Lester. *Sweepings*. (1926)
Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage*. (1895)

Croy, Homer. *West of the Water Tower*. New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d. (58D–133)

Dahlberg, Edward. *Bottom Dogs*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. (58D–134)

Davenport, Homer. [no specific title listed]

Dell, Floyd. *Moon-Calf*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920. (58D–139)

Dos Passos, John. *Manhattan Transfer*. (1925)

Edwards, Albert. *A Man's World*. (1912)

Faulkner, William. *Sanctuary*. New York: The Modern Library, 1932. (58D–159)

Ferber, Edna. *Girls*. (1921)

Fergusson, Harvey. *Capitol Hill*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1923. (49D–679)

Fitzgerald, Francis Scott Key. *The Beautiful and Damned*. New York: Scribner's, 1922. (58D–162)

Flagg, Jared. *The Crimes of Jared Flagg*. New York: n.p., 1920. (58D–163)

Ford, Paul Leicester. *The Honorable Peter Sterling*. (1894)

Fort, Charles. *The Outcast Manufacturers*. New York: B. W. Dodge, 1909. Inscribed to "his partner" by the author.

Frederic, Harold. *The Damnation of Theron Ware*. (1896)

Frederick, John J. *Druida*. (49D–716)

Friedman, Isaac Kahn. *By Bread Alone, A Novel*. New York: McClure, Phillips, 1901.

Fuller, Henry B. *With the Procession*. (1895)

Gale, Zona. *Miss Lulu Bett*. (1920)

Garland, Hamlin. *Main-Travelled Roads*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1916. Inscribed: "Theodore Dreiser's Library of Realism." (49D–764)

Glasgow, Ellen. *Barren Ground*. (1925)

———. *The Romantic Comedians*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1926. (49D–793)

Goodman, Daniel Carson. *Hagar Revelly*. (1913)

Graham, Carroll, and Garret Graham. *Queer People*. (1930)

Granberry, Edwin. *Strangers and Lovers*. (1928)

Grant, Robert. *Unleavened Bread*. (1900)

Green, Helen. *At the Actors' Boarding House and Other Stories*. (1906)

Hapgood, Hutchins. *The Autobiography of a Thief*. (1903)

———. *The Story of a Lover*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919. (58D–186)

Hecht, Ben. *Erik Dorn*. Introduction by Burton Rascoe. New York: The Modern Library, 1924. (58D–193)

Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*. (1929)

Henry, O. *The Best of O. Henry*. (1929)
Hergesheimer, Joseph. *The Lay Anthony*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1919. (58D–58D196)
Herrick, Robert. *Together*. New York: Macmillan, 1908. (49D–904)
Heyward, Du Bose. *Porgy*. New York: George H. Doran, 1925. (58D–198)
Hobart, Alice Tisdale. *Oil for the Lamps of China*. (1933)
Holding, Elisabeth. *Invincible Minnie*. (1920)
Howe, Edgar Watson. *The Story of a Country Town*. Introduction by Carl Van Doren. New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1926. (58D–200)
Howells, W. D. *Their Wedding Journey*. (1894)
Hughes, Langston. *Not without Laughter*. (1930)
Hull, Helen Rose. *Islanders*. New York: Macmillan, 1927. (49D–936)
Huntington, Elizabeth. *Son of Dr. Tradusac*. (1929)
Ireland, Alleyne. *Joseph Pulitzer*. New York: M. Kennerley, 1914. (49D–955)
James, Henry. *The American*. (1879)
———. *Roderick Hudson*. (1875)
Jewett, Sarah Orne. *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. (1896)
Johnson, Josephine. *Now in November*. (1934)
Kantor, MacKinlay. *Diversey*. (1928)
Kelley, Edith. *Weeds*. (1923)
Kelley, Ethel. *Heart's Blood*. (1923)
Kelly, Myra. *Little Citizens*. (1904)
Kemp, Harry. *Tramping on Life*. (1922)
Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street*. (1920)
Lewisohn, Ludwig. *The Island Within*. (1928)
Loos, Anita. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. (1925)
Lowrie, Donald. *My Life in Prison*. (1912)
Lyon, Harris Merton. *Sardonics: Sixteen Sketches*. New York: Metropolitan Syndicate, 1908. (58D–239)
Marks, Henry K. *Undertow*. (1923)
Masters, Edgar Lee. *Mirage*. (1924)
Matson, Norman H. *Day of Fortune*. New York: The Century Company, 1928. (49D–1205)
Melville, Herman. *Typee, A Real Romance of the South Sea*. Boston: L. C. Page, 1892. Inscribed to "Sue." Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1222)
Munger, Dell H. *The Wind Before Dawn*. (1912)
Neumann, Robert. *Flood*. Trans. William A. Drake. New York: Covici-Friede, 1930. (49D–1299)

Norris, Frank. *McTeague*. (1899)
Oliver, John Rathbone. *Victim and Victor*. (1928)
Ornitz, Samuel Badisch. *Haunch, Paunch, and Jowl: An Anonymous Autobiography*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1923. (58D–273)
Ostenso, Martha. *Wild Geese*. (1925)
Payne, Will. *The Story of Eva*. (1901)
Peterkin, Julia. *Black April*. (1927)
Phillips, David G. *Susan Lenox, Her Fall and Rise*. New York: D. Appleton, 1920. (49D–278)
Post, Melville D. *The Man of Last Resort*. (1892)
Rumsey, Frances. *Mr. Cushing and Mlle. De Chastel*. (1917)
Sachs, Ermanie. *Red Damask*. (1927)
Sandburg, Carl. *Smoke and Steel*. (1920)
Scott, Evelyn. *The Narrow House*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921. (58D–309)
Sinclair, Upton. *Oil!* Long Beach, CA: Published by the author, 1927. (58D–318)
Smits, Lee. *Spring Flight*. (1925)
Steele, Robert. *One Man*. (1915)
Stein, Gertrude. *Three Lives*. New York: John Lane, 1915. (49D–1616)
Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*. (1937)
Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Dred*. (1856)
Stribling, Thomas S. *The Forge*. Garden City, NY: D. D. Doran, 1933. (49D–1645)
Suckow, Ruth. Farm stories. [no specific title listed]
Sullivan, Edward. *Rattling the Cup on Chicago Crime*. New York: Vanguard Press, 1929. (49D–1659)
Sweeney, Ed. *Poorhouse Sweeney*. Foreword by Theodore Dreiser. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927. (49D–1663)
Tarkington, Booth. *Penrod* (1914) or *Seventeen* (1916).
Train, Arthur. *The "Goldfish."* New York: Century, 1915. (49D–1708)
Twain, Mark. *Huckleberry Finn*. (1884)
Van Vechten, Carl. *Parties, Scenes from Contemporary New York Life*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1930. (49D–1741)
Vance, Joseph Lewis. *Joan Thursday*. (1913)
Vandercook, John. *Black Majesty, The Life of Christophe King of Haiti*. New York: R. Bon Gooks, 1930. (49D–1729)
Westcott, Glenway. *The Grandmothers*. (1927)
Wharton, Edith. *The Age of Innocence*. (1920)
———. *The Custom of the Country*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,

1913. (49D–1793)
Wharton, James. *Squad*. (1928)
White, Hervey. *Quicksand*. (1900)
Whitlock, Brand. *The Turn of the Balance*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1907. (58D–349)
Whitman, Stephen. *Predestined*. (1910)
Willard, Josiah. *Tramping with Tramps*. New York: The Century, 1899. (49D–1849)
Williams, Fred Quick Benton [pseud. for Herbert Elliot Hamblen and William Stone Booth]. *On Many Seas: The Life and Exploits of a Yankee Sailor*. (1897)
Wolfe, Thomas. *Look Homeward Angel*. (1929)
Wood, Eugene. *Back Home*. (1905)

Appendix 2
Books with Marginalia

Theodore Dreiser wrote in very few books, but he did mark books by underlining passages and by placing marks in the margins. The following list of books with underlining and marginalia includes books that have extensive marking throughout, such as Henry Klein's *Bankrupting a Great City* and Rufus Jones's *Finding the Trail of Life*, but the list also includes books that have almost no marking, such as Pedro Labarthe's *The Son of Two Nations* and Johann von Herder's *God, Some Conversations*. The acquisition numbers that follow each citation "49D–" or "58D–" identify the books within the Dreiser Collection and indicate the year (1949 or 1958) the books arrived at the University of Pennsylvania. Acquisition lists were prepared indicating that only 117 of the more than 1900 books have markings or marginalia. The following list of works with marginalia was compiled by examining the acquisition lists, which indicate works with marginalia and underlining, as well as the actual collection. But as Stephen Brennan has noted, several books, such as Freud's *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, have no acquisition numbers because they arrived as part of the manuscript collection, so these books are identified by the file number that indicates their place within the manuscript collection.

Abrams, Albert. *Man and His Poisons*. New York: E. B. Treat, 1906. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–3)

American Trade Union Delegation to the Soviet Union. *Russia After Ten Years*. New York: International Publishers, 1927. Underlining. (49D–31)

Ames, Edward Remington. *The Unknown God (Jehovah)*. Los Angeles: Ivan Deach, 1931. Underlining and notes. (49D–33)

Andersen, Arthur Olaf. *The Second Forty Lessons in Harmony*. Boston: C. C. Birchard, 1929. Underlining and notes. (49D–34)

Barron, Clarence Walker. *More They Told Barron*. Ed. Arthur Pound and Samuel Taylor Moore. New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1931. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–83)

———. *They Told Barron*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–84)

Bazalgette, Leon. *Henry Thoreau, Bachelor of Nature*. Trans. Van Wyck Brooks. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–91)

Bhagavad-Gita, The Song of God. Trans. Swami Pravhavananda and Christopher Isherwood. Hollywood: Marcel Rodd, 1944. Marginalia by Helen Dreiser. (58D–3)

Bragdon, Claude. *The Arch Lectures*. New York: Creative Age Press, 1942. Marginalia. (58D–112)

Brill, Abraham Arden. *Psychoanalysis: Its Theories and Practical Application*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1918. Underlining. (49D–168)

Brown, Brian. *The Story of Buddha and Buddhism: His Life and Sayings*. Philadelphia: David McKay, 1927. Underlining. (49D–180)

Brunton, Paul. *A Search in Secret India*. New York: B. P. Dutton, 1943. Underlining and marginalia. (58D–113)

Bukharin, Nikolai Ivanovich. *Historical Materialism, A System of Sociology*. New York: International Publishers, 1925. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–194)

Burton, Richard Francis. *The Kasidah of Haji Abdu el-Yezdi*. Trans. F. B. Portland, ME: T. B. Mosher, 1896. Underlining. 1 of 925 copies. (49D–213)

Calverton, Victor Francis. *The Liberation of American Literature*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1932. Underlining and marginal notes. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. (49D–223)

Carnevali, Emanuel. *A Hurried Man*. Dijon: Three Mountains Press, 1925. Marginalia. (49D–236)

Chase, Stuart. *The Economy of Abundance*. New York: Macmillan, 1934. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–248)

Christensen, C. L. *Man and Woman in Prehistory*. New York: C. L. Chris-

tensen, 1937. Underlining and marginalia. (File 11724)
De Casseres, Benjamin. *Exhibitionism: A New Theory of Evolution*. New York: Benjamin De Casseres at the Blactone Publishers, 1936. Marginalia. (58D–138)
Drummond, Henry. *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. New York: J. B. Alden, 1887. Marginalia. (49D–611)
Duncan, Isadora. *My Life*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927. Marginalia. (58D–143)
Fabre, Jean Henri Casimir. *Marvels of the Insect World*. Trans. Percy F. Bicknell. New York: D. Appleton, 1938. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–674)
Fairchild, Henry Pratt. *Profits or Prosperity*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1932. Underlining. (49D–675)
Fort, Charles. *Wild Talents*. New York: Claude Kendall, 1932. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–717)
Fox, George. *Journal*. London: E. P. Dutton, 1924. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–724)
Freud, Sigmund. *Reflections on War and Death*. Trans. A. A. Brill and Alfred B. Kuttner. New York: Moffat, Yard, 1918. Underlining. (49D–748)
———. *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*. Trans. A. A. Brill. 2nd ed. New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1916. Underlining and marginalia. (File 11725)
Friends, Society of. *Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of Members of the Religious Society of Friends*. Philadelphia: The Tract Association of Friends, 1871. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–755)
———. *Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends*. Philadelphia: W. H. Pile's Sons, 1910. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–755)
Garrison, Winfred Ernest. *Catholicism and the American Mind*. Chicago: Willett, Clark, and Colby, 1928. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–773)
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. *Goethe's Elective Affinities*. Boston: D. W. Niles, 1872. Marginalia. (49D–795)
Haeckel, Ernst Heinrich Philipp August. *The Riddle of the Universe at the Close of the Niineteenth Century*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1914. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–843)
Hamilton, James Burr. *Children of the Slums*. Scotch Plains, NJ: Flanders Hall, 1941. (58D–184)
Harper, Fowler Vincent. *Give Me Liberty*. Illus. Chichi Lasley. Chicago: Wheeler Publishing Company, 1942. Marginalia. (58D–188)
Harvey, Basil C. H. *The Nature of Vital Processes According to Rignano*.

Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1909. Underlining and marginalia. (file 11726)

Hearn, Lafcadio. *Letters to a Pagan*. Detroit: R. B. Powers, 1933. Underlining. Number 20 of 550. (49D–891)

Herder, Johann Gottfried von. *God, Some Conversations*. Trans. Frederick H. Burkhardt. New York: Veritas Press, 1940. (58D–195)

Hudson, William Henry. *Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1916. Underlining. (49D–931)

James, William. *On Some of Life's Ideals, On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings, What Makes a Life Significant*. New York: Henry Holt, 1913. Marginalia. (58D–210)

Johnson, Hewlett. *The Socialist Sixth of the World*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1939. Marginalia. (58D–212)

Johnston, Charles, ed. and trans. *Bhagavad Gita: "The Songs of the Master."* Flushing, NY: Charles Johnston, 1908. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–975)

Jones, Rufus Matthew. *Finding the Trail of Life*. New York: Macmillan, 1927. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–977)

———. *The Later Periods of Quakerism*. Vol. 2. London: Macmillan, 1921. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–978)

———. *The Trail of Life in the Middle Years*. New York: Macmillan, 1934. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–979)

Klein, Henry H. *Bankrupting a Great City*. New York: Henry H. Klein, 1915. Underlining and marginalia. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. (49D–1016)

Knight, Grant Cochran. *American Literature and Culture*. New York: R. Long and R. R. Smith, 1932. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1023)

Labarthe, Pedro Juan. *The Son of Two Nations*. New York: Carranza, 1931. Marginalia. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. (49D–1048)

Langland, William. *Piers Plowman*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1912. Underlining. (49D–1065)

Lawrence, David Herbert. *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. London: Martin Secker, 1933. Marginalia. (58D–223)

———. *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*. London: Martin Secker, 1931. Marginalia. (58D–225)

Leisy, Ernest. *American Literature*. New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1929. Underlining. (49D–1076)

Lemon, Harvery Brace. *Cosmic Rays Thus Far*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1936. Marginalia. (58D–227)

Lenin, Vladimir Ilich. *Lenin, Stalin, 1917: Selected Writings and Speeches*.

Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1938. Marginalia. (58D–228)

Lewis, Alfred Henry. *Richard Croker*. New York: Life, 1901. Underlining. (49D–1090)

Liepmann, Heinz. *Poison in the Air*. Trans. Eden and Cedar Paul. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1937. (58D–230)

Lodge, Oliver Joseph. *Ether and Reality: A Series of Discourses on the Many Functions of the Ether of Space*. New York: George H. Doran, 1925. Marginalia. (58D–41)

Loeb, Jacques. *The Organism as a Whole, from a Physiochemical Viewpoint*. New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1916. Marginalia. (58D–234)

Macaulay, Thomas B. *Macaulay's Life of Samuel Johnson*. New York: American Book Company, 1895. Underlining and marginalia. Signed by Florence Scovell. (49D–1142)

Maitra, Harendranath. *Hinduism: The World-Ideal*. New York: Temple Scott, 1922. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1171)

Martin, Everett D. *Liberty*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1930. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1193)

Maugham, William S. *Of Human Bondage*. New York: George H. Doran, 1915. Underlining. (49D–1206)

Melville, Herman. *Shorter Novels of Herman Melville*. New York: H. Liveright, 1928. Underlining. (49D–1221)

———. *Typee, A Real Romance of the South Sea*. Boston: L. C. Page, 1892. Inscribed to "Sue." Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1222)

Miller, Dayton Clarence. *Sparks, Lightning, Cosmic Rays: An Anecdotal History of Electricity*. New York: Macmillan, 1939. Underlining. (49D–1247)

Moore, Benjamin. *The Origins and Nature of Life*. New York: Henry Holt, 1913. Underlining. Signed by R. Chambers. (49D–1267)

Morey, William Carey. *Outlines of Greek History, With a Survey of Ancient Oriental Nations*. New York: n.p., 1903. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1271)

Morier, James J. *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*. London: Macmillan, 1902. Underlining. (49D–1272)

Myers, Gustavus. *History of the Great American Fortunes*. 3 vols. Chicago: C. H. Kerr, 1911. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. Underlining throughout. (49D–1283)

———. *The History of Tammany Hall*. New York: Published by author, 1901. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. Underlining and marginalia.

(49D–1286)

Nearing, Scott. *The Economic Organization of the Soviet Union*. New York: Vanguard Press, 1927. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1292)

Nelson, A. W. *Yankee Swanson Chapters from a Life at Sea*. New York: Sturgis and Walton Company, 1913. Marginalia. (58D–265)

Parsons, Cornelia M. *The Quaker Cross*. New York: National Americana Society, 1911. Marginalia. (49D–1369)

Peattie, Donald C. *Green Laurels, The Lives and Achievements of the Great Naturalists*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1376)

Penfold, Saxby. *Why a Roman Catholic Cannot Be President of the United States.* New York: Saxby Penfold, 1928. Underlining and typed notes. (49D–1378)

Plumb, Glenn. *Industrial Democracy*. Washington D. C.: International Association of Machinists, 1921. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. Underlining. (49D–1389)

Polakav, Walter N. *The Power of Age: Its Quest and Challenge*. New York: Covici-Friede, 1933. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1398)

Powys, John Cowper. *Confession of Two Brothers: John Cowper Powys and Llewelyn Powys*. Rochester, NY: The Manam Press, 1916. Underlining and marking. (58D–54)

———. *Essays on Emily Bronte and Henry James*. Girard, KS: Haldemann-Julius, n.d. Marginalia. (49D–1403)

———. *A Philosophy of Solitude*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1933. Underlining. (58D–57)

———. *Wolf Solent*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1929. Notes on box. (58D–284)

Powys, Llewelyn. *Love and Death*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1414)

Pücker, Carl Erdmann. *How Strong is Britain*. New York: Veritas Press, 1939. Marginalia. (58D–288)

Quinton, Rene. *Soldier's Testament*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1930. Marginalia. (58D–290)

Reik, Theodore. *Psychology of Sex Relations*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1945. Underlining and marks. (58D–294)

Reitmeister, Louis. *Love*. New York: Lewis Copeland, 1930. Underlining. (49D–1453)

Reynolds, Mrs. Fred. *A Quaker Wooing*. London: Hutchinson, n.d. Underlining. (49D–1458)

Robinovitch, Louise. *A Chemical Basis for the Treatment of Tuberculosis*.

n.p.: n.p., n.d. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1475)

Russell, Bertrand. *Marriage and Morals*. New York: H. Liveright, 1929. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1491)

St. John's University, Brooklyn. *The Annual Catalogue of St. John's College*. New York: St John's College, 1928. Underlining. (49D–1496)

Santalov, A. A., and Louis Segal, eds. *Soviet Union Year-Book, 1930*. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1930. Underlining. (49D–1605)

Scherman, Harry. *The Promises Men Live By: A New Approach to Economics*. New York: Random House, 1938. Marginalia. (58D–303)

Schlapp, Max. *The New Criminology*. New York: n.p., 1928. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1511)

Schnittkind, Henry. *The Story of the Human Race*. Boston: Winchell-Thomas, 1935. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1515)

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Studies in Pessimism*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1912. Marginalia. (58D–305)

Spencer, Herbert. *Data of Ethics*. New York: Hurst and Company, n.d. Marginalia. (58D–322)

———. *First Principles*. New York: A. L. Burt, 1880. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1607)

Sprague, Oliver. *History of Crises Under the National Banking System*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1611)

Steiner, Rudolf. *The Occult Significance of Blood*. New York: Anthroposophic Publishing, 1926. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1621)

Strachey, Rachel. *A Quaker Grandmother, Hannah Whitall Smith*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1914. Underlining. (49D–1644)

Swinburne, Algernon. *Poems*. New York: Modern Library, n.d. Underlining. (49D–1666)

Taber, Mary Jane. *Just a Few "Friends."* Philadelphia: J. C. Winston, 1907. Signed by the author. Marginalia. (49D–1670)

Thomas, Allen. *A History of the Friends in America*. Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1905. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1685)

Thompson, Dorothy. *The New Russia*. New York: H. Holt, 1928. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1690)

Train, Arthur. *On the Trail of the Bad Men*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925. Marginalia. (49D–1709)

Twining, Harry. *The Physical Theory of the Soul*. Westgate, CA: Harry Twining, 1915. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1722)

Uspenskii, Petr. *Tertium Organum, The Third Canon of Thought*. New

York: A. A. Knopf, 1925. Underlining. (49D–1728)
Waddell, Helen. *Peter Abelard*. London: Constable, 1933. Inscribed to Dreiser by the author. Underlining. (49D–1754)
Waley, Arthur. *Zen Buddhism and Its Relation to Art*. London: Luzac & Co., 1922. Underlining. (File 11733)
Watson, John Broadus. *Behaviorism*. New York: The People's Institute Publishing Company, 1924. (58D–343)
Wells, Herbert George. *The New Machiavelli*. New York: Duffield, 1917. Underlining. (49D–1782)
———. *The Science of Life*. 2 vols. Garden City, NY: D. D. Doran, 1931. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1784)
Winter, Paul. *What Price Tolerance?* Hewlett, L. I., NY: All-American Book, Lecture, and Research Bureau, 1928. Underlining and marginalia, extensive notes on back pages. (49D–1826)
Woolman, John. *The Journal of John Woolman with an Introduction by John G. Whittier*. Boston: J. R. Osgood, 1871. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1844)
Yewdale, Merton Stark. *The Origin of the Human Race*. [New York] Privately printed [American Book-Stratford Press], 1939. Marginalia. (58D–355)
Young, Arthur Henry. *On My Way*. New York: H. Liveright, 1928. Underlining and marginalia. (49D–1854)

"Are not cat men afraid of mothers?" Self-Creation in *Dawn*

Stephen C. Brennan
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Despite the usual attacks on its style—"Theodore Dreiser / Should ought to write nicer," Dorothy Parker quipped (603)—*Dawn* has been highly praised since its publication in 1931. It is "in the manner of his best naturalistic novels," wrote Edwin Clark (603), while H. L. Mencken found the book's hero "as vital and memorable a character as . . . Frank Cowperwood and Carrie Meeber" (612). More recently, Richard Lingeman has proclaimed that *Dawn* and *Newspaper Days* constitute "one of the greatest American autobiographies" (2: 351).

Why then does *Dawn* lack any significant critical history? The reason perhaps lies in the assumption that if Dreiser's fiction is autobiographical then his autobiographies must be simply factual. Yet in 1930, when Dreiser returned to the manuscript he had written in the 1910s, he treated it much the way he did his fiction. The thing is "too diffuse and not well arranged," he wrote his editorial assistant Louise Campbell. It needs to be "worked over [so] an effective thing can be selected from it. But the thing now is to shape it up as orderly as possible and then reconsider it as a whole" (*Letters to Louise* 67). But he did more than select and shape; he added, perhaps invented, new material. In 1922, he had used the last fifteen chapters of the *Dawn* MS to begin *A Book About Myself*; when he returned to the MS of *Dawn*, he needed some sort of closure and so added the kind of philosophical coda typical of his novels. He also added incidents to the narrative proper. While the uncut holograph ends with virginal Theo making his first newspaper success on the Chicago *Globe*, the published version leaves off at the moment he is fired for stealing twenty-five dollars from his employer at a pay-on-time furniture company. Now, though, he is sexually experienced, having made it along the way with a German baker's daughter in a back alley, a lusty Italian girl in the back room of a Chicago real estate office, and a

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number of slatternly women in the Chicago slums. Whatever else may have motivated the additions of these sordid sexual encounters, Dreiser apparently thought they would help make *Dawn* the "effective thing" it is.

Dreiser indicates his idea of effective art through the childhood experience of his protagonist, the narrated self I will call Theo. Having always enjoyed "natural beauties," Theo is introduced to "the mystery of form" when he sees foundry workers transforming "great stacks of pig-iron and vast quantities" of rusting metal utensils and broken machine parts into "a new, clean mass" (*Dawn* 135). Emptying "cauldrons of sputtering, glowing metal" into moulds of "delicate designs" and then brushing the "rough results . . . with steel brushes to make them smooth," the "strange, grimy" (135–36) men express their joy in laughter and music. "And as they did so," Dreiser remarks, "my soul whistled and sang with them" (136). *Dawn* itself is a fusion of diverse materials, some crude, in the cauldron of Dreiser's own creative imagination, and it is Dreiser's song of himself, a self apart from the "strange, grimy" life of others yet sharing their creative joy. Those added scenes of sordid sexuality are of a piece with the finished book's design, marking stages in the process by which Theo arrives at that climactic moment when, following the devastating loss of his mother, he discovers that "I was I" (516)—and then finds that maybe he isn't after all.

Metaphors of the Self

Autobiographies, James Olney argues, create only the illusion of intimacy. "We do not see or touch the self," he writes, "but we do see and touch its metaphors: and thus we 'know' the self, activity or agent, represented in the metaphor and the metaphorizing" (qtd. in Eakin 188). The metaphors of the self in *Dawn* derive in large part from Dreiser's reading in psychoanalyis and evolutionary science, particularly works by Sigmund Freud, A. A. Brill, Herbert Spencer, and Ernst Haeckel.

Exactly when Dreiser started *Dawn* or learned about Freud is not known. Sometime in 1913 seems a reasonable estimate on both counts, since the earliest chapters of the holograph show a Freudian influence and since he was up to chapter 13 of the autobiography by April of 1914 (Dreiser, *Diaries* 448), shortly before his move to Greenwich Village. By 1915, "Freud was sweeping the Village" (Swanberg 197), though it was probably 1918 before Dreiser gave the new psychology his serious attention (Rusch). That was the year he began a long friendship with A. A. Brill, the prominent psychoanalyst who had written widely on the subject and had translated many of Freud's works. Dreiser praised the case studies in Brill's *Psychanalysis*

for having "the appeal of great tragedy" (qtd. in Zanine 93) and consulted with Brill on the psychology of murder during the composition of *An American Tragedy*. In 1931, the year of *Dawn*'s publication, Dreiser wrote that Freud's *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, *Totem and Taboo*, and *The Interpretation of Dreams* were a continuing "revelation to me—a strong, revealing light thrown on some of the darkest problems that haunted and troubled me and my work" (qtd. in Zanine 93). It is not surprising, then, that Dreiser would think of *Dawn* as a "self-analysis."[1]

Psychoanalysis basically involves tracing associations back to repressed childhood memories. In the holograph's third chapter, Dreiser describes Theo as "too young to feel save by association of ideas." When his sister stops him from taking nickels from the eyes of a kindly neighbor's corpse, he is left feeling "heavily oppressed by something—death or disaster or loss which I got no doubt by association." Theo, we can infer, will always hunger for money and fancy clothes because he associates their denial with death. It is by establishing such associations that Dreiser gives depth, resonance, and continuity to his protagonist's emotional life.

What seems first to have impressed Dreiser about the new psychology was the curious fact that all ideas have "intimate associative ties" (Freud, *Dreams* 442) with their opposites and thus that primitive lust and violence are inseparable from the most idealized and tender love. In *A Hoosier Holiday*, written during the same period he was drafting *Dawn*, Dreiser equates Southerners' deep aversion to sexual offenses with the "inversion of the psychoanalyst" (236). Southerners, like "children and savages," act violently because of the "enforced suppression of very natural desires in another direction" (237). This sounds very like Freud's *"suppression and inversion of affects,"* an operation of the unconscious "dream-work" by which a forbidden wish is expressed by its opposite (*Dreams* 442). The Southerners' psychic censors invert sexual desire into "moral purity" and into rage against sex offenders. In the third chapter of the *Dawn* holograph, Dreiser attributes a similar inversion of hatred to Theo's emotional response to beauty: "Rage is the antithesis of it [beauty] and by some occult inversion its defender. We slay to defend beauty or because we think it has been outraged or because we hope to procure it." Dreiser crossed out this muddled passage in the holograph; nevertheless, it reveals much about the underlying aggression in Theo's psychosexual life.

According to Ellen Moers, the "bits" of Freudian jargon in *An American Tragedy* "point to large ideas with literary consequences" (262). In *Dawn*, jargon terms like "inversion," "projection," and the infamous "chemism" point to two large ideas—the Oedipus complex and sublimation. The usual

Oedipal take on Dreiser is that he blamed his ineffectual, religion-bound father for his family's deprivations and identified with and adored his mother.[2] But Oedipal feelings are never so simple. They always involve ambivalence towards both parents, a simultaneous love and hate resembling the inversion of affect that so interested Dreiser. Theo certainly resents his father and loves his mother, but since John Paul Dreiser is absent during much of Theo's childhood and adolescence, Sarah Schänäb Dreiser becomes the primary object of the boy's Oedipal ambivalence and his struggle to overcome her dominance the central drama of his youth. Responding to the many paeans to her courage and devotion, one of the book's first reviewers remarked that Sarah "wears a halo" (Hansen 592). Yet a glimpse of Sarah from below reveals the cloven hoofs beneath her skirts.

Spencer's place in the constellation of Dreiser's intellectual heroes is well known, Haeckel's less so. Perhaps because his *First Principles* had shattered Dreiser's lingering faith in his father's Catholicism, Spencer became "a great father of knowledge" to Dreiser, his "unalterable laws" extending through all phenomena, including mental development: "Our minds belong to the universe which Spenser has united; our thoughts upon its meaning are subject to the laws which he has laid down" ("Reflections" 240–41). In Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe* (1900), Dreiser found another "brilliant synthesis" revealing "the underlying unity in inorganic and organic Nature" and the continuity between the mental life of lower forms and man's "psychic development" ("Additional Comments" 216). He thought Haeckel too willing to believe in free will, yet, as he wrote Edward H. Smith in 1921, "I read Haeckel, and have for years, (re-read) with unwearied interest" (*Letters* 1: 337).

One of *Dawn*'s important metaphors of the self derives from the so-called "nebular hypothesis," which both Spencer and Haeckel took from the eighteenth-century French astronomer Laplace. According to this hypothesis, the universe began with a highly diffused cloud of matter, a nebula, which, owing to the unequal operation of forces, began to rotate and condense around various centers of gravitational attraction. Following their synthetic tendencies, both philosophers treat cosmic processes in human terms. The sun and planets have evolved from an initial vast "parent mass" (Spencer, "Nebular" 265); the "luminous ring" of Saturn is "the embryo of a new moon, which has detached itself from the mother-planet, just as the planet was released from the sun" (Haeckel 369). Taken by the metaphor, Dreiser conceived the individual in terms of "the centripetal energy which keeps him whole" ("Additional Comments" 218). In *Dawn*, Theo is born into a family of "a peculiarly nebulous, emotional, unorganized and

traditionless character" (9) and only in early manhood begins to feel a "change in myself—something more toward individuality—the intense centripetal integrality of the same—as opposed to what hitherto might have been looked upon as a merged or group feeling—integrality with the other members of my family and home" (440). Such imagery unites the cosmic process of Spencer and Haeckel with the Freudian conception of the self as a tenuous organization emerging in time from primal unity with the mother, the family's "central centripetal star."

The controlling metaphor of the new "depth" psychology has its counterpart as well in Haeckel's recurring image of life as labyrinth. Haeckel was best known for his theory that "phylogeny recapitulates ontogeny," in other words, that the development of the individual embryo recapitulates the evolution of the species. Birth is an emergence from the "labyrinth of our embryonic development" (Haeckel 70) into a series of others—"the mythological labyrinth" of religion (72) and "the dark labyrinth of the countless separate phenomena" (366). Since there is no dualism of matter and spirit, only transformations of a single universal "substance," mental and spiritual life falls under the "supreme and all-pervading law of nature, the true and only cosmological law, . . . *the law of substance*" (211), hence Haeckel's chapters on "The Embryology of the Soul" and "The Phylogeny of the Soul." In a chapter entitled "Our Embryonic Development," which is not for the squeamish, Haeckel shows the continuity between human and primitive reptilian development; like all vertebrates, human embryos are now "enclosed in . . . membranes, or bags, which are full of water," an adaptation to life on land by "the oldest reptiles, the *proreptilia*, the common ancestors of all the amniotes" (66). Women, like "the older and lower groups of the placentals," have a placenta that is at first "covered with a number of short villi; these . . . take the form of pit-like depressions of the mucous membrane of the mother, and are easily detached at birth" (68).

Haeckel's recapitulation theory appears in *Dawn*'s description of the womb as the place where "toils the race-producing force, fumbling like a blind man in a cave, eyeless and feeling dark walls, as though trying to escape into the light and air without" (12). Elsewhere Dreiser images the womb as a pit filled with stagnant liquid. His mother, for instance, tells how, in her youth, she was "looking down into a boggy depression—a hollow filled with small trees and dank with pooled water" when she saw thirteen "will-o'-the wisps or bog fires, dancing over the water," which, in her "imaginative mind" (6), she took as a sign of the thirteen children she would bear. The muddy hole thus corresponds to the womb from which life emerges, only, as Dreiser writes later, to disappear back into "eternal substance" (20).

Since it is connected with Sarah's imagination, the transformation of filth and muck into beautiful forms of light introduces the theme of Freudian sublimation. In a passage that Dreiser marked for special attention in his copy of *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, Freud upholds the opinion of cultural historians that sublimation, the redirection of "sexual powers from sexual aims to new aims," supplies "powerful components for all cultural accomplishments" (584).[3] In one of Dreiser's descriptions of this process, the unconscious becomes a kind of womb from which issue libidinous wishes transformed into cultural forms: "[W]e are only spring mouths through which subterranean fluids arise and bubble. . . . Indeed, our uttermost dreams of love or possessions or power are transmuted—by what magic I know not—into lands, power, works of art, achievements in science or thought, . . . in short, achievement in any field" (*Dawn* 422–23). Once Theo the college man decides to commit his energies to intellectual work, he avoids "satiations" in fear that his "strength" will be "diverted" (458) from his primary aim.

Sublimation becomes possible because "dams"—the "psychic forces" of "loathing, shame, and moral and esthetic ideal demands"—are erected against the libido during the period of sexual "latency," which extends from age five or six to the onset of puberty (Freud, *Three Contributions* 583). The demands of Theo's aesthetic ideal create such a dam one summer afternoon when the ten-year-old is poking around in his back garden with a stick and his dog uncovers "a wet, shiny hole" filled with "thick, muddy water" (*Dawn* 62) and inhabited by a salamander, one of those reptilian ancestors of Haeckel's. The creature's "unlikeness, strangeness" gives him the "creeps," especially its "sleek, moist body, lizard-like in form, with wet pink feet and long, thin head." He reacts with violent loathing: "I killed it, squashing its blood and flesh in the mud, and then ran as fast as I could, death and mud-holes and left-over specimens of saurian life completely filling my mind" (62). This trauma helps explain why "cleanness or uncleanness" (238) becomes the deciding factor in his human relations, especially his sexual ones. To the extent that women are associated with the salamander's "strangeness," an animal, if not reptilian, nastiness, they will disgust him and divert his libido to other aims.

This turn is prefigured in Theo's directing his gaze upward towards "an immense comet—a red, pellucid affair, with a great flaring tail"—that appears in the night sky about the time he kills the salamander. As an embryonic artist, he wonders how "this great red stranger, sharply outlined against a silver and lemon sea of space," and "death and mud-holes" could both belong to the "strange, beautiful, . . . terrifying mystery called life. Like one

fumbling in a dark cavern, I also felt blind, yet even so sensing something of the glittering scintillations of a world or universe or mystery which could not be dark" (62). The long, moist salamander and the long-tailed comet are both phallic objects, the one a nightmare self associated with degradation and filth and unleashing Theo's animal aggression, the other an ideal self associated with eternal, inviolate beauty and stirring those higher aspirations that will eventually enable him to transform "flaring ideas" (526) about sexual conquest into the "creative flares of the sensitive and creative mind" (587).[4]

Yet the salamander's "strangeness" remains part of that "strange, beautiful, . . . terrifying mystery called life." While Theo yearns towards "the diaphanous radiance of the morning," the mere "suggestion of the dark, harsh sensuality of the lecher" is necessary to give "all beauty and all reality a meaning. This, this, this contact joy between two was its meaning!" (210). As Freud puts it in a passage Dreiser underlined in his copy of *Three Contributions*, "The highest and the lowest everywhere in sexuality hang most intimately together."[5] And as Dreiser himself puts it late in the holograph, while the lecher is not always a poet, a poet must be "a luster after women."

Birth of the Cat Man

In a paragraph headed "The Riddle of the Sphinx," which Dreiser marked in his copy of *Three Contributions*, Freud asserts that the legendary riddle is a "distorted form" of the child's question, "Where do children come from?" A boy will naturally "presuppose in all persons he knows a genital like his own" and will give up this belief only "after severe internal struggles (castration complex)" (595). As Brill defines the word tautologically in a footnote Dreiser underlined, a complex is "a complex of ideas of marked emotional accentuation which was split off from consciousness and repressed into the unconscious" (142n). The castration complex is important in a boy's development, for it is the threat of castration by the father that ordinarily turns the boy away from his mother as sexual object. For Theo, however, it is his mother who embodies this threat.

Theo's terror and humiliation are intimately related to a group of images, literal and figurative, that function much like Freud's castration complex. Caves, cluttered rooms, and other labyrinthine spaces—versions of the womb and the salamander hole—are the most important and are associated with his mother, who at times seems the virtual embodiment of the formless and dark nether region. The poverty ensuing from the burning of John Paul Dreiser's mill has plunged Sarah into "a slough of despond"; her thoughts

are "vagrom" and "poetic," leading to "no real plan or method of procedure" that would enable her "to shape" (33) the lives of her children. What plans she does formulate are "the feeblest of economic outlines" and provide "no real escape, but only a colorful day-dream" that fades into an almost "wholly extinguished glow under the tarnishing power of reality" (33). If it is true that in her poetic side she is "beyond or behind so-called good and evil" (10) and that in her children's imaginations she is a "lamp, a dream, an inspiration," it is equally true that she is "enmeshed" in dreams of another sort as well, the "ridiculous figments of earthly blames and shames" (50), that is, the conventional morality that makes Theo guilty for his natural impulses. In a world that sometimes requires common-sense judgments, as when Theo's sister is being seduced by an obvious bounder, Sarah is passive, leaving Theo baffled by a "psychology" he can describe only as "a most curious enigma" (256).

Other images arousing castration anxiety are threateningly phallic: feet and shoes; animals, especially cats; demons; and knives, teeth, and other penetrating objects. The complex appears most terrifyingly when Sarah takes as a boarder a coal miner with "immense" feet, "a drunken, frowning demon, swearing, talking of his love affairs with women, and of his gambling" (102). This "big Jack," whom Dreiser gives the mythic name "Wildfellow" (102), waves "an enormous horn-handled knife and threatens to cut someone" and once threatens "to put me in the fire head first, seizing me and holding me so near that I screamed" (103). Wildfellow is a nightmare crawled out of the salamander hole, a brute who brags of having once "dug his way out" (103) of the ground after a mine explosion and who is arrested for murder a few weeks after his arrival. Theo has a similarly terrifying experience when an older co-worker in a Chicago hardware store assaults him. The man is "a veritable 'Bill Sykes' for size and savageness" (318); he eyes Theo "about as cheerfully as might a tiger or a lion" (318) and gives him "a resounding kick with his heavy boot" when Theo says he is too weak to lift heavy stoves, leaving the boy "shamed and disgraced" and "swelling with semi-impotent rage" (320).

Women, too, can be phallic threats, for Theo's unconscious knows no sexual difference. There is his country cousin Jess, for one, who exemplifies her family's "degenerate stock" with her "piercing, savage, catlike black eyes" and her "feet . . . shod with shoes of an impossible size and weight." Moreover, she is "about as conscious of her virtue as a cat" (236) and gives birth the next year only three months after her marriage. Here is a double bind for sure. If female sexuality threatens both to suck him back into the primal ooze and to assault him from without, how is he to keep himself whole?

As Freud says it should, Theo's castration complex develops when, between the ages of three and five, his sexual urges drive him to answer the riddle of the Sphinx. Even at this tender age Theo has "an abnormally inquiring mind" (32), the "insatiate curiosity" that will later cause him to rummage in his sister's "drawers" (256) to find out why she is behaving strangely (she is pregnant, it turns out). Chapter 3 is crucial, for in it Theo's sexual curiosity confronts the forces of repression, the "miasmatically puritanic" (15) attitude of the Midwest. Some of the memories in this chapter are of actual dreams, but Dreiser knows that all "early impressions are deceptive" (16) and at one point asks, "[I]s it all a dream?" (19). He thus invites a reading based not on facts and chronological development but on the curious logic of dream work, with its inversions, condensations, and displacements.

Some of these dreamy memories have a "*rancid*, spell-casting glory" (16; emphasis mine) because they carry the taint of death. Amidst the "profundities" of his "chiaroscuro" past, he recalls a "courageous" dog named Prince who was "constantly burying bones" and "getting into fights." Children often first observe the sex act in animals, Freud writes, and they often mistake it for violence.[6] When Prince attacks another dog, a "stranger" whose sex is not identified, "death seemed imminent" to the boy. If the dogs are copulating rather than fighting, the fact that Prince is "torn off" of the other dog would reinforce Theo's later castration fears. It is also significant that his mother is "standing in the doorway" directing Theo's big sister, who, yelling and screaming, comes running with a bucket of water to throw on the animals. To cross the threshold of sexuality, Freud might say, Theo must first get past Sarah, the woman who simultaneously arouses and forbids his desire.

Other memories indicate a fascination with erect males. In church he sees "a bleeding Jesus high on a cross" and calls out for it as he would for a toy, "a great scandal to my father" (18). The cross, Dreiser remarks later, "was originally a phallic symbol" (343), though Theo is as yet unaware of any personal threat in Jesus' wounds. However, there is certainly ambivalence, a "mingled fear and delight," when he is held up by his father to watch the approach of a marching band led by "[a] giant under a shako, in gilt and gold . . . twirling a huge baton" (18). Sometimes the memory involves both penetration and knowledge of the male. He stands on the lawn of a "rich man," his face "pressed between two iron pickets," gazing on "a giant iron stag, its horns spreading enormously" and wondering what "so great an animal" (18) could be. Or he climbs a fence to await "an old, one-armed watchman" who allows him to "reach down into his pockets" to fetch

treats. When, after the death of this maimed male, Theo reaches out for the coins covering the corpse's eyes, he is warned "that what I was doing was very wrong, quite cruel, in fact. It was perhaps my first vivid impression of death" (20).

At the center of these dream memories is *Dawn*'s most well-known incident, which follows immediately Dreiser's speculation that his remembered early years are "all a dream." One sultry day the "mother child" is "playing on the floor of the front room, and about my mother's knees." Sarah's body, perhaps because of the heat, is relatively open to investigation, for she is wearing "a white dressing-sacque" and "a pair of worn slippers." When, in his "playful peregrinations," Theo "came to her feet and began smoothing her toes," she speaks words so deeply significant that Dreiser "can hear her now":

> "See poor mother's shoes? Aren't you sorry she has to wear such torn shoes? See the hole here?" She reached down to show me, and in wonder, and finally pity—evoked by the tone of her voice which so long controlled me—I began to examine, growing more and more sorrowful as I did so. And then finally, a sudden, swelling sense of pity that ended in tears. I smoothed her shoes and cried. (19)

Most readers take at face value Dreiser's assertion that this moment "was the birth of sympathy and tenderness in me" (19). Yet this scene has some puzzling elements—the controlling force of Sarah's voice, the fact that her caress intensifies the boy's sorrow and helplessness rather than consoling him, the "wonder" that only gradually turns to pity at seeing a tattered slipper, which must have been an ordinary sight for a boy reared in poverty.

Theo, the child who has thrust his face through the opening in the fence "to see" the great stag, who feels around in a man's pockets for treats, has made a surprising discovery as he casually explores his mother's lower parts (he is at first playing "about my mother's knees") and perhaps glances up her loose-fitting gown before she diverts his attention to the hole in the slipper. Compare this scene with Freud's account of the birth of fetishism in a passage Dreiser underlined in *Three Contributions*:

> the desire for looking originally directed to the genitals, which strove to reach its object from below, was stopped on the way by prohibition and repression, and, therefore, adhered to the foot or shoe as a fetich. In conformity with infantile expectation, the female genital was hereby imagined as a male genital. (568n)

At this point, Freud is discussing the foot as "a very primitive sexual sym-

bol" (567) and the "shoe or slipper" as "a symbol for the female genitals" (567 n2). Still ruled by "infantile expectation"—his "naive interpretations" (*Dawn* 17) of reproduction—Theo is at first stroking his mother's toes, something he also possesses. Then, reaching down with her hand and employing that controlling "tone"—Of command? Of accusation? Of self pity?—Sarah directs him to the hole in the slipper. If I am right here, that extended moment of "wonder" is when he unconsciously associates the two sights, causing him to see her in terms of what she lacks instead of what she has. His gesture of smoothing her shoe and his tears express both his attempt to deny the existence of the hole and his anxiety about his own integrity. That "sudden, *swelling* sense of pity that ended in tears" neatly captures both Theo's dilemma and his artistic promise. As an image of failed tumescence, it foreshadows his many pathetic failures with women. As an image of gestation, it leads to "the birth of sympathy and tenderness" that will be the source of his artistic power. Paradoxically, that makes "castrated" Sarah the father of Theo's art.

The rest of his life Theo will yearn for the "altogether lovely" Sarah of his "earliest recollection" (4), before his discovery of her difference. The trauma explains why he identifies "the mystery of form" with men in a foundry smoothing rough shapes into "a new, clean mass." It explains why in pursuing his "passion for understanding" he will not "delve into the intricacies and subtleties of things" but rather interest himself in life's "general forms and surface appearances" (277). It explains why in wandering the streets of Chicago he will feel relief to leave the slums, where "sows of women and degenerate men" are "vegetating in slimy, rancid indifference" (573), for regions where "towering Catholic churches" and "immense skyscrapers" dominate, where the city seems "like a lithe young giant, unkempt in the main and befogged with the unintelligence of youth, but smooth-limbed, erect, powerful, hopeful" (574). And it explains why, by the time he enters college, "beauty," the veiled and thus seemingly intact female form, has become "a kind of fetich with me" (380).

The slipper incident only hints at the prohibition that Freud says diverts the boy's gaze from the mother's body to the fetish object. However, a terrifying prohibition evoking the wrath of the Old Testament God structures another important event narrated a few paragraphs earlier. Sarah has warned Theo against getting into "mischief" in the cellar. Apparently the warning has not worked, so when "a plague of locusts" descends on the town, the warning is

> made effective or given teeth by the tale of a mythical "cat man" who lurked there and might get me! And now, among the dark green

> shadows of evening trees, this same "cat man," only come to possess the voice if not the body of the locust or the locust the voice and body of the "cat man," and leaping from one tree to another, as the sound of sawing came from now here, now there. And seeking whom to devour? When two locusts were heard at once, it simply meant that there were two "cat men" or demons lurking to bedevil me! (Tell me, oh, physicists and chemists, why so great a fear, so roiling a sensitivity, in a physical chemism four or five years of age?) (17)

The voices of the locusts and the voice of Sarah Dreiser both deeply disturb the boy, and the imaginative transformation of the locusts into demons points towards the treatment of ambivalence described in *Totem and Taboo*. A person who feels a death wish for a loved one, Freud writes, naturally feels guilty when that person dies and projects the original aggression onto an imagined avenging demon (851–52). In the normal Oedipal situation, the father, the rival for the mother, is the loved one the boy wishes dead. The cat *man* would seem to be a symbol of male authority, but the dream-like quality of the experience suggests a more complex reading. Dreiser marked for emphasis in *Psychanalysis* Brill's discussion of condensation and displacement in dreams—the first being the fusion of diverse elements, the second being the transfer of importance or meaning from one element to another (46–47). Since Sarah's voice carries the prohibition, the cat man may be a condensation of both parents. The voices and bodies of cat man and locust are easily interchangeable in Theo's imagination, and the cat man undergoes a literal displacement as well—"leaping from one tree to another." Whoever caused it originally, the boy's fear is rapidly displaced from one parent to the other, a speculation borne out by the almost immediate introduction of a second cat man.

The "teeth" in Sarah's tale are certainly those of the cat man but are not her only weapons. As we learn later, John Paul is merely a "pantalooned figure" of the man every family needs, and so Sarah, even while unwilling to be the "moral censor," nevertheless would "hold my father in reserve as a weapon to be brandished or even used in critical moments" (228–29). If poverty has been a "crucifixion" (22), she has compensated for her emasculation even as she hangs like the bleeding Jesus on her phallic cross. Henceforth, the "bite of beauty," conjoined with "the desire of the flesh" (388), will deny Theo the peace of mind he needs for higher pursuits.

If Theo's "mischief" in the cellar hardly seems to represent a death wish calling for an avenging demon, another of his dream-like recollections does. When he is about three or four, Theo, along with two of his sis-

ters and an older brother, is "presiding at an obviously cruel, and yet at bottom no more than mischievous, attempt to hang a cat from the limb of an apple tree" (16). Once the cat is "swinging in the wind," the children dance around it until they are "driven or called off by someone—very likely our mother—and the cat cut down" (16). The scene resembles the primitive rituals Freud describes in *Totem and Taboo* in which the "brothers and sisters" of a "totem clan" sacrifice the totem animal, which is a "maternal inheritance" (888). A totem animal always represents the father, Freud writes, and by following "the paths of association" (906) in his patients he concludes that the same displacement occurs in the animal phobias of children who, as a result of the castration or Oedipus complex, have death wishes for their fathers (908). When Sarah invents a murderous cat man, she employs the guilt from Theo's attempted cat murder to make him obey. If the cat was not already a symbolic father, it becomes an avenging parental figure following Sarah's threat.[7]

But why is Theo the object of the mother's aggression and prohibition to begin with? In *Totem and Taboo,* Freud asserts that

> An evil impulse—a death wish—towards the beloved person is always at the basis of the formation of a prohibition. This is repressed through a prohibition . . . connected with a certain act which by displacement usually substitutes the hostile for the beloved person, and the execution of this act is threatened with the penalty of death. . . . [T]he original wish for the death of the beloved other person is then replaced by fear for his death. The tender altruistic trait of the neurosis therefore merely *compensates* for the opposite attitude of brutal egotism which is at the basis of it. (863)

Sarah's sacrificial love for her children is clearly compensation for brutal egoism.[8] As a young wife and mother, she was so filled with "angry rebellion or rage" (6) against her plight that she wished either she or her three children were dead. When all her children did die, she vowed to God that she would never again complain, even if she had ten more children. The ten children came, but she has not quite been able to keep her vow: "True, I heard her say once or twice that her life was accursed, or that she wished she were dead, but in the main, she faced life most cheerfully . . . and through it all succeeded in drawing her children to her as with hooks of steel" (7). Here we see why Theo's phobias are a "maternal inheritance." Sarah has turned some of her aggression around onto herself in the form of suicidal desires and has projected more into some supernatural entity that, like Theo's demon cat man, makes her feel "accursed." If the "certain act"

prohibited Theo, "mischief" in the cellar, represents the sex act, then the prohibition would convey a displaced death wish for her husband, a man as "[p]assionate" as she but too religious, too bound in "iron conventionalism" (10) to allow contraception.

The remainder of her aggression is directed at Theo and his siblings, which is why her love is as rigid and binding as her husband's iron religiosity and feels like "hooks of steel." Among Sarah's "tricks," Dreiser recalls, is that whenever her younger children became "too obstreperous" she would "threaten to leave us" (150). If she saw no "contrition," she would pack her things and start out the door, invariably producing in Theo and his siblings "an intense depression and the most dissolving of emotions," a descent into the formless realm of the salamander with lifelong effects: "In fact, long after I had passed my thirtieth birthday, and when she had already been dead for some years, I still used to dream of her as being alive but threatening to go off and leave me, and would awake to find myself in tears" (150–51). This passage sheds light on Theodore's earlier response to the voice of the devouring cat man:

> Instantly I was in the house and to my mother's skirts, enfolding her legs in my fright, crying, pressing my face against her body. (Oh, years later, when she was really gone, I knew why I cried!) But when a velvety hand was laid on my cheek, could there be any real danger anywhere? Was I not safe with her? Are not "cat men" afraid of mothers? (17)

Dreiser's use of the interrogative mood calls in question the consoling power of a love that binds only by threats of its withdrawal. If cat men are afraid of mothers, then Theo can never become one himself as long as he clings to his mother's body. In that cryptic parenthesis ("when she was really gone, I knew why I cried!"), he implies his later recognition, lurking on the fringes of his consciousness, of the ambivalence that lay behind his tears, the recognition that her "loving" and "velvety" hand was both the source of consolation and an instrument of terror.[9]

Into the Labyrinth

In order for Theo to achieve anything like a satisfying sex life, he must find a way to overcome the fixation on his mother. The process by which he does so is structured by a series of descents into the labyrinth once sex ceases to be "a dormant instinct, or at least a sealed mystery" (125), that is, when Theo, at the end of the latency period, is initiated into genital sexual-

ity. But he can't spend all his libido on sex, for then he would have none left for sublimation. To be a good artist, he must be a bad lover.

Dreiser singled out several passages in Brill's *Psychanalysis* dealing with the dangers of "too much and prolonged affection on the part of the mother" (282). The boy who grows up under such an influence "remains forever 'mama's boy' . . . devoid of those qualities which characterize the real boy" (283) and may suffer from "psychosexual impotence. By preventing the boy from projecting his love to strangers there results an unconscious incestuous fixation on the mother which then acts as an inhibition to sexual relations with other women" (272). Theo grows up one of those "spindling, house-broken, mothery, well-behaved little boys" (*Dawn* 88), and his most intense love experiences have less to do with the girl or woman herself than with "a projection of my own mood" (459). The "well-known mechanism of projection," Brill writes, acts much like a dream, for it causes a repressed "inner perception" to find a substitute in a distorted "perception from without" (117). Theo lusts after all sorts of girls, but the ones he fixates on resemble Sarah in their "certain nebulousness of mood" and their shyness, "which seemed to bode terrible storms of mood and feeling" (459).[10] On each occasion, he has been "gripped . . . with an intensity which defies description" and "laid hold of as by an iron force" (459) reminiscent of Sarah's "hooks of steel." "Ligeia" (460), he calls the virginal teenager he falls for in college, evoking that terrifying sexualized mother-figure who, in the hallucinations of Poe's drug-crazed narrator, returns from the dead to inhabit the body of the innocent Rowena. An incest wish inhabits Theo's later fantasies as well when he imagines himself in such "secret scenes" as the "hidden murder and debauchery of the Cenci type" (539). Here is the perfect Oedipal dream for a boy uncertain of his sexual identity, for he can be both Count Cenci, the rapist father, and Beatrice Cenci, the ravaged daughter who repays incest with parricide.

Guilt for his incest wish would explain why, despite his fetishistic idealization of beauty, he continually seeks out encounters with willing girls, even prostitutes, who leave him feeling "macerated and self-contemptuous" at his failure, the victim of "[s]ome damned sprite of the anachronistic, some imp of the perverse as Poe understood him" (383). The "damned sprite" is the demon cat man, who, it turns out, has always performed his mischief from within.

Theo's first descent into the labyrinth, a penetration of the beautiful surface, occurs when his mother sends him on an errand to the Evansville brothel run by Annie Brace, the lover of Theo's older brother Paul. Sarah is ignorant of Annie's profession when she "thrust [him] into the very centre

of this so-called 'den of iniquity' " (141), and so the boy has no qualms about following the long "passage" from the brothel's "beautiful" outer rooms, "everything in them rich and wonderful" (142), to the sexual dens, where glimpses through open doors reveal all in disorder: "Segments of beds . . . ; dressers and odd bits of furniture; and in one case a yellow-haired siren half naked before her mirror. . . . The bedding in every case, as I noted, was tumbled, the garments of the occupant strewn about in an indifferent and (to me even then) blood-tingling way." That tingling blood produces his first erection: "In a flash, and without being told, a full appreciation of the utility of the male as such came to me." Yet the dams of repression are already in place; what he sees is "so strange and to me exotically moving that I felt I must not acknowledge them even to myself." Unconsciously fearing that these "vulgar" and "pink-meated sirens" will lure him to destruction, he sees them as "wonderful . . . forms, that spirometric formula that appears not only to control but compel desire in the male." If desire is "turned from the genitals to the form of the body," Brill writes in a passage Dreiser underlined, it "may be turned into the artistic ('sublimation')" (353). Theo's reaction to the half-naked "pink-meated sirens" dramatizes this process and repeats his response to the pink-footed salamander in his slimy hole.

With the practice of masturbation comes a descent into the labyrinth of Theo's guilty imagination. Because of his father's warnings, he vows "to avoid loose or evil women . . . as I would the devil himself!" but the only alternative is "frantic efforts at self-satiation" that "harried me from hell to hell!" (209). The tormenting demons are most obviously his parents and priests, with their constant injunctions "to keep pure in thought and feeling" (209). He has also learned from a friend about "the attendant dangers of masturbation . . . and the various diseases and contagions" (208) that visit the licentious. Later Dreiser recalls the advertisements for quack nostrums whose illustrations of "emaciated, sunken-eyed victims of youthful excess . . . haunted me" (270), returning in "terrifying dreams, in which ghosts or skeletons walked and threatened imminent destruction" (271). These ads, as well as the "silly" sex manuals of "religionistic" doctors are "[o]ld wives' tales" (272), of which Sarah's tale of the cat man is the prototype. Even though a friend has graphically described the anatomy and function of both sexes, Theo is so afraid of intercourse that he constructs an alternative explanation. Sex "must relate more to hugging and kissing than anything else," he theorizes, though he thinks that even "the pleasure of viewing and caressing" the female "form" might overcome him: "Could I endure? Would I have the vitality, the self-repression even, so that I should not

faint?" (209).[11]

The reason this repressed boy feels the need for even more "self-repression" is that sex threatens his very sense of integrity. For one thing, he tends to project his own violent desire, so when he "feast[s]" his eyes on a female nude, some "Venus displayed in a book" (209), he experiences that feasting as an assault from without. He is left "transfixed" by the "potent lines," with "a veritable feeling of fear or weakness, an actual wave of bashful terror and almost insupportable breathlessness" (209–10), that "strangulation of the emotions" he had noted in Brill's account of neurosis (14).

He gets a chance to try out his new sexual theory on a "shy little maid" named Myrtle Trego, his first serious "sex contagion" (211). While he has often fantasized about the "hidden physical lines" of other girls, his sensuality has been "held at bay" (213) by Myrtle's virginal beauty; he wants "[n]o more than to kiss or touch her, to have her look into my eyes and indicate that she cared" (214). This time the labyrinth is a dark closet in Myrtle's house where, during a party, the adolescents go to kiss and hug while playing post office. Theo, "ashamed" at being long ignored, finds himself called to the closet by a kindly "postmistress" and subjected to a familiar experience: "When I entered I saw her outlined against the shadow, and the next moment with a 'Poor Theo!' she put her arms around my neck and kissed me twice. It was so soothing to be sympathized with this way that I was ready to cry; it was almost as though she were mothering me, and perhaps she was" (218). As with his own mother, the girl's touch and pitying words both comfort him and confirm his inadequacy.

When he gets the nerve to call Myrtle into the closet there is no chance he will play the cat to this "veritable shy mouse of a girl": "I stood before her limp and choking. . . . I tried to say something, but no sound came." Myrtle approaches him, but he can do no more than "lay my hands on her arms." "As I bent to kiss her," Dreiser recalls, "her head slipped shyly into her arm and only her cheek was exposed. Even so, it seemed like the surface of the Cooba, that gate to paradise" (219). This is a gate Theo is content not to open. Later, when Myrtle calls another girl into the closet, he concludes that she is "not a boy's girl" (219). Given Theo's general passivity, this first "true union" (458) has all the chaste idealism of a homoerotic attachment between schoolgirls.

When Theo is fourteen and still so "[h]ypnotized, tongue-tied, spellbound" that he can "only gaze" (245) at the rich beauties that intimidate him, he is virtually dragged into the labyrinth and despoiled of his virginity by a German baker's daughter. As opposed to the Cooba-like cheek of Myr-

tle Trego, this "common" girl's eyes are the doorway to the sexual cave: "Her eyelids . . . and her eye sockets—the pink, puffy flesh just beneath the eyes—evoked a sudden, unanticipated heat in me. She had a sensual, meaty attractiveness . . ." (247). He has no chance to sublimate as he had with the "pink-meated" whores in Evansville, for one day the girl lures him into an alley, an "aisled maze" of packing cases, where ensues "a brief if mock-defensive wrestling match" during which the two "twisted here and there." Theo is "dragged . . . down with her" and, after "an enormous and almost tremulous confusion" either achieves coitus or has "it achieved for me" (248). Although Theo has some pride in his success, he can't help but think of his mother's response ("Shameless and so evil, as my mother would have said" [248]) and feels no more capable than ever of getting the beautiful girls he dreams of.

Despite this evidence of his physical competence, fear of impotence long governs Theo's psychosexual life. As Dreiser knows in middle age, this impotence is in truth "hypochondria," "an imaginary sex weakness" (365), or "protective delusion" (443), that his unconscious creates to help him avoid the debilitating pity of women. Occasionally, though, he needs a little help from his friends to maintain a manly image. Induced by a high-rolling classmate to do the rounds of Chicago brothels during Christmas break of his college year, he fondles and snuggles with a "meaty German girl" (445). He is uncertain how to "extricate" himself from the situation without purchasing her wares when his friend takes charge: "To smooth matters, we each took a cigar off the tray, which he paid for, and affecting a serenity and indifference which I did not feel, we set forth again" (447). Sometimes, Freud has famously commented, a cigar is just a cigar. Then again, sometimes it's not.

Birth of the Hero

During his year at Indiana University, Theo and a friend named Howard Hall, as a diversion from a series of failed "courting and sex-expeditions" (401), join a group sponsored by the geology department to explore the many caves underlying the region. Deciding to go it alone one afternoon, the novice spelunkers roam "long passages and spiral ways and amazingly complicated turns," discover a lake "suggesting the silent reaches of the river Styx" (404), and stumble into a "cavernous chamber which might have been the throne room of an underworld king" and which conjures up "[a]ll sorts of weird and fantastic fancies" (405). In this place of death and dreams—an obvious figure for the unconscious—lives the cat

man who performs and punishes "mischief." Finding that the string they have unrolled to guide their way back has broken, Theo thinks, "A German might have imagined a *Poltergeist* at work—a demon of mischief" (407). Theo, being "[h]alf German" himself, begins to suspect "evil spirits, Jinns, those German imps of the perverse," but he entertains another possibility—that he and his companion have themselves "unconsciously . . . pulled it too hard" (407). This is the right explanation. Theo's demon of mischief has always been a projection of his own guilt and desire, the imp of the perverse that drives him repeatedly into the labyrinth of the destructive feminine. If the broken string represents his unconscious still trying to punish the little boy for mischief in the cellar, it has also led him into the realm of the "underworld king"; it makes him break the cord that keeps him dependent and forces him to fumble his way out of the womb and to deliver himself into the light as a Whitman-like babe of the vegetation:

> Up each passageway we crawled, seeking feelingly. . . . At the end of some eight hundred yards . . . a dim light, a very feeble ray. . . . Gaily, madly, stumbling over stones and falling here and there, we scuttled toward it, eventually emerging through the small hole which had admitted us and which gave out upon a level field of green, late grass, on one corner of which the evening sun was still shining. That sun! Its light! . . . We threw ourselves on the grass and shouted for joy. Gone the fear of death. . . . Behind and below us was this great cave. . . . [W]e did not want to go back, ever. (408)

Although the experience returns again and again in "a haunting dream" (402), Theo and Hall talk and write about it often over the years until the "terrors" become "mere embellishments" of a personal myth, "a great adventure, *our* great adventure." It is not so much in the doing, then, as in the telling that the escape from the labyrinth becomes the birth of "at least one hero" (408).

The association of writing and power goes back to at least the time of the frightening "Wildfellow," when Theo practices penmanship with the help of "Hill's Manual of Etiquette and Social and Commercial Forms." The one exercise he remembers is telling: " 'The cat is watching the rat' or 'Will the cat catch the rat?' or 'Yes, the cat will catch the rat' " (105). More significant in encouraging his artistic bent, however, is his first year of public school, where he escapes the dogmatism of the Church. His seventh-grade teacher, May Calvert, is pretty and young, and Theo desires her as much as he does Myrtle Trego and the more sensuous girls in his class. Because his family has teased him, or because he is just shy, or because he suf-

fers from "repression," he has developed a "poignant consciousness" (193) of being homely in the eyes of girls, yet there is something in May's "soft, kind eyes" and "friendly voice" (192) that makes contact with her body entirely satisfying. He enjoys her "habit of pinching my ear as she passed or putting her hand on my hair and smoothing it," and when one day she lays her hand on his shoulder, Dreiser writes, "I snuggled up to her, because I was magnetically drawn and because I thought she was lovely" (194). Here he re-experiences the sensual pleasure he once knew with his "altogether lovely" mother before she set those "hooks of steel" into his flesh.

The reason May's body is so comforting is that she makes him feel whole rather than defective. "Theodore, you read beautifully," she tells him after he recites from "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." While the story itself concerns the ineffectual Ichabod Carne's encounter with an avenging sexual rival, Brom Bones in the guise of the murderous and, Freud would say (*Dreams* 380), castrating Headless Horseman, the threat is contained by the literary form. As Theo realizes that form in his own voice, he discovers that in language he can appear to be that ideal self worthy of a woman's love. "You read as you are," May tells him. "It is perfect" (194). Without causing any anxiety, she can point out his "lacks and defects" in grammar and even "pierce the thickness of my skull" with grammar lessons; as long as she praises his "longest sentences and paragraphs" as "correct and orderly," he will only flush "with some mystical vicarious pride" (193).

When Dreiser says that May "*spelled* opportunity instead of repression" (192; emphasis mine), his metaphor is apt, for while Sarah prohibits mischief in the cellar, May encourages Theo to explore the basement of the local high school, the location of the pubic library; she even signs his "privilege card" as his "guarantor" (198). The way down becomes the way up. Among Theo's favorite books is Kingsley's fantasy *Water Babies*, whose portrayal of the "metaphysical and mystic impulses which project life" recalls his boyhood days in Sullivan sitting beside "pools and waterholes watching for crawfish and salamanders" (198). Books, however, are not salamander holes or dark winding labyrinths but "an immense reservoir of ideas, scenes, materials which could and would enlarge my vision" (199). While his previous reading of pulp romances has moved him to sympathetic identification with "the maiden forlorn" (198), contact with Hawthorne, Irving, Poe, Cooper, and other masters stirs in "quite nebulous" Theo the desire to "imitate" them. It also helps initiate a process of active self creation: "These books . . . lifted me into an entirely different state . . . and in a way aided me better to formulate myself to myself" (199). Books in hand, he would "ascend" to a second floor bedroom to "bury" himself in their pages

to become conscious of the "many things, the mere knowledge of which appeared to coincide with power" (200). While some people merely "drifted into things," he decides, when it comes time to decide his future he will prefer to "think my way out" (199).

Arriving at Indiana University, Theo is still "nebulous" in his thinking, "general and undifferentiating as opposed to special and particular" (376), but thinking does start to be his way out. The relationship with his mother is replaced by male friendships, most notably with William Levitt, a football hero, ladies man, and all-around BMOC, and the studious Russell Sutcliffe. Levitt, "a kind of devil among the girls" (400), matches Theo up with a series of willing young women, the result always being failure and self-loathing. Moreover, Levitt's tales of conquest have a castrating effect on "sex hungry" Theo; they are "inexpressibly painful, and kept so as is a wound by irritation" (400). Sutcliffe, however, exudes "a serene and broadening influence on me"; he is "the most intellectually sincere and valuable of all the students I met at college" (393). Here is a new kind of cat man to emulate, for he is like "a Hindoo seer or a cat outside a mousehole, waiting for the secret or meaning of life to pop out, and on which he could seize" (401). Sutcliffe's example, along with Hall's, "caused me to seek for the wellsprings of life and human actions" (401). Books become "my one escape. . . . Since I could not play, I read and learned" (400).

By Christmas break of his college year, Theo has begun to experience that "intense centripetal integrality of the same" (440) and a new potency of thought and speech. Until this time, sexual and verbal failure have been one and the same. In a particularly humiliating encounter with an eager young woman—"Devil! Beast!" he thinks—he fears that if he can't speak he will "be exposed as impotent" (429). Still he is "reduced by that lunatic word or thought: *impotence*" (430). Even though the girl responds to his every "gesture of approach" and lends a hand the way the baker's daughter had, the outcome is premature ejaculation and shame. Theo must find a way to express his true virility, the envy of "a young bull" (429), in potent words of his own. He does so that spring when he moves to a new boarding house on the outskirts of town to get away from sexual temptations. There he encounters "a big intellectual bully by the name of Trodgers" who likes "to drive into their holes" (453) all who debate him. At first Theo fears the man's "great rough voice" (453) but eventually speaks up and wins an argument entirely owing to a superior handling of ideas and the forms of logic (he is defeated another time "by lack of facts" [455]). As he watches "the light dying out of his eye" at the moment of victory, he feels for the moment "very much like the gladiator Trodgers certainly was" (455).

The question now becomes whether he can succeed as well in bed. Not long after returning to Chicago from Bloomington, he settles on the "definite" thought that he can "restrain" (501) the excitement that leads to premature ejaculation, that explosion of the still-too-nebulous self. One afternoon, alone in the real estate office where he works, he eyes a darkly sensuous Italian girl on the street, and when she returns his smile he decides on the "heroic course" (502) of beckoning her into the office. Because Lissitina is "just playing about . . . to see what *authoritative* things she could achieve here without being molested" (503; emphasis mine), Theo's conquest repeats his victory in his first debate with Trodgers. True, he doesn't meet much resistance from the girl, who is "really madly over-sexed and daring in her search for adventure" (503). But he is still much more the active molester than he had been with the German baker's daughter. It is he who, with "nervous delight," opens the door to the small cluttered back room that, with its iron cot and toilet, is another labyrinth; there he overcomes her "mock opposition," achieves a "conversation on the couch itself," and is able to "master my own fever sufficiently to achieve adequacy" (503–04). At the moment of her orgasm (her "emotion" Dreiser puts it euphemistically), she "seize[d] me convulsively and even affectionately—a gesture which, followed by a smiling calm" (504), expresses her satisfaction. No longer will the caress of a sexually powerful woman leave him with "that sickening, reducing, really destroying sense of incompetence."

Yet the "glorious feeling" following on his successful "conversation" proves a bit premature, for he is commanded "not to speak" if he sees her again, "but just signal—she couldn't receive any letter because of her father and mother" (504). Reduced to silence by parental authority and disappointed at the girl's failure to return, he suffers the "reducing thought" that he might not have pleased her enough— "Oh, cracked and flawed conclusion!" (505). "[W]hy in the devil hadn't she returned after all that?" he wonders in dismay. As long as he battles the cat man/demon on the ground of the female body, he can never be the "perfect" Theo mirrored in May Calvert's eyes and words of praise.

Theodore, a Kosmos

The autobiographical act, Paul John Eakin argues, is in one view "a symbolic analogue of the initial coming together of the individual and language that marks the origin of self-awareness; both are attempts, as it were, to pronounce the name of the self" (213). As a child, Dreiser recalls, he was "known as Dorsch, Dorse, Ted, Theo, Dodo and possibly one or two other

diminutives" (*Dawn* 10). The many "diminutives" imposed by others suit a nebulous little boy but not the "competent male" (505) who emerges in the back room of the real estate office. It is "just about this time," Dreiser writes, that his mother dies, suggesting that relative mastery over his body and language is coincident with "quite the most profound, psychologic shake-up" (506) of his life. This shake-up is the moment of Theo's awareness of himself as an individual distinct from his mother, and it points towards that later moment when Dreiser objectifies that self as a magnificently erect organic form and pronounces his own name.

No specific cause is given for Sarah's weakening condition, though one doctor's tentative diagnosis of "organic lesion" (510) seems to trigger Theo's childhood anxiety about her body. A few days before Sarah's death, Theo's brother Paul arrives with his latest paramour, an actress whose formal beauty disturbs the boy deeply: "She was a creature of rounded arms, oval face, blonde hair, and a velvety, tailored perfection which quite upset me" (511). Paul is thirteen years older than Theo and has long been the family's "bulwark" against "misfortune" (146), so there is Oedipal rivalry in Theo's wanting to enjoy "sex-wise" (511) the seemingly intact beauty who lusts so openly for Paul.[12]

This sexual undercurrent runs through the death scene in Sarah's bedroom, which repeats the mock wrestling matches of Theo's sexual encounters. The fact that Theo, in helping Sarah to the toilet, has to see that it is "arranged or improvised" before she can use it faintly suggests the filth and disorder of those events. But now Theo is much more in control. When Sarah tries to rise from bed, he "sprang to her side and put my arms around her" to help her sit up. After he prepares the toilet, he helps her to her feet only to feel her pulling him downward: "[She] drooped, and except for all my strength vigorously exerted, would have fallen. As it was, she slipped to the rug at the side of the bed, relaxed, very weak and pale, and then looked at me, at first with such sickly and weary eyes, a most exhausted and worn look" (512). The Italian girl too had "relaxed" in Theo's arms just before her orgasm, that "little death" of tradition, and at the moment of climax had "seize[d] me convulsively and even affectionately." The achievement of that "first adequate and decisive relation" (504) is mirrored, and inverted, in the ending of the mother-son relation:

> in a trice, no more—a, to me, mystic thing appeared or took place. Her eyes cleared—that muggy yellowness that was in them before, gone, and as instantly and in its place a clear, intelligent, healthy light, quite remarkable and most arresting to me, even startling. For now it looked as though she were thinking or trying to say some-

> thing to me, but through her eyes alone. But only for a second or two, and then, as suddenly, a heavy, grey dullness once more, almost fishy and unintelligent, and then complete blankness, no light or fire at all. And all was over. (512)

This sudden "startling" burst of light recalls Lissitina's sudden convulsive "emotion" and Theo's "glorious feeling" afterward, and Sarah's struggle to "say something" connects her death with that earlier "conversation." But Theo sees in Sarah's mystic look not the girl's nervous spasm but a sudden gleam of thought, "clear, intelligent, healthy light" that replaces the "muggy yellowness" and thus resembles the comet "sharply outlined against a silver and lemon sea of space" (62). That comet, I have argued, represents an ideal masculine form. At the moment of her death, Sarah and Theo almost meet for an instant on the plane of the ideal, above the nastiness of the flesh and beyond sexual difference. The moment contains the promise of that perfect "understanding" that Theo has always craved but that "all too often" has remained "veiled in her eyes" (367). When the light blinks out, the look that replaces it—"heavy" and dull, "almost fishy and unintelligent," and finally blank—marks Sarah's collapse into the primitive disorganization of the salamander hole. Now "mere meat . . . holding the form of my mother" (515), her body lacks even the appeal of a "pink-meated" Evansville whore.

Sarah's death also recalls that moment when, seeing "the light dying out" in Trodgers' eyes, Theo feels his own manhood. This time there is no inversion of meaning in the two events. At first, Sarah's passing seems to mean annihilation of Theo's world: "Our youth and home were over. She was gone—collapsed and even vanishing as a cloud—and all that she had represented was so soon to go with her" (514). But Sara's return to a nebulous condition among the "dissolving elements" (515) also means the breaking of the umbilicus, the "strong sustaining cord" (514) that has made Theo merely an extension of his mother. No longer "represented" by her, he must, by exercising his own centripetal force, represent himself. Vanity makes him "calm and collected, in order to show how individual and forceful I now was," but it is not all show: "For within me now was something else: a new sense of individuality which my mother's passing seemed suddenly to have completed. For now I was I" (516).

The thought that he has only himself to rely on seems "actually to swell in me as a new strength" (516), suggesting both tumescence and gestation; it turns loss into gain and prevents him from being the meaningless "pale shell" (520) his mother has become. Besides his early sorrows and joys, the "part" of Theo that dies with his mother is his "dreams and illusions" (515).

Because seeing his mother's defects through the rent in the veil is intolerable, Theo must draw upon this inner, creative, strength to fashion new illusions. Life, Dreiser says in his authorial voice, should sometimes be taken "at its face value, for when you pry below the surface you get lost in its amazing and wholly confusing abstrusities. . . . It is at times like lifting a man-hole cover . . . or again, like flaying the skin from an animal" to consider the inner workings of oneself and others—"curiosity, vanity, selfish thoughts" (517). Sitting at the side of his dead mother and "holding her dead hand," Theodore now controls the hand whose caress once terrified him into being a good boy. Truly "stricken" and "heavy with grief," he cannot soar, yet he sees her in her ideal completeness, in the past "so beautiful, so patient, so tolerant, so long-suffering" and now "a dream that was encased only in the most lovely memories" (517). While as a child he could not smooth over the hole in Sarah's slipper, he can now encase her, turn her into another fetish object—one of those "absolute paragons" he has worshipped from afar, Aphrodite "inviolably enshrined" (380) in dreams and memories.

In the weeks following this experience, however, Theo finds that he does not have to take life merely at its "face value" as he feels "a tendency to an artistic interpretation" (527). He becomes a cosmic lover whose experience Dreiser renders in a Whitman-like catalogue: "As I saw it here, I loved life. Its material facial texture—the lamps that glowed at evening in the stores; the cars that jingled; the cables—now already laid on the West Side—that clanged; the odors of cooking, baking, canning that came form one place and another; the sense of peace, content, happiness, enthusiasm for life which seemed to surround and fill those who had something to do—all shone and resounded in my ears as might a symphony" (528). This catalogue, like a symphony, has a structure; it moves from the surface to the depths—from sights "out there," one might say, to sounds, smells, and finally emotions "in here." As Whitman would put it, Theo, simultaneously surrounded and filled by experience, is both in and out of the game.

While Dreiser's long-lined, free-verse "song of the true mothers of the world" (367) is an obvious imitative tribute to Whitman, Dreiser, in consonance with his overall treatment of the self as a movement from the nebulous to the definite, emphasizes Theo's growing control as much as his spontaneity. "I permit to speak at every hazard," Whitman crows in "Song of Myself," "Nature without check with original energy" (lines 12–13). Theo, however, is a "composer" who "orchestrates great symphonies" as well as "the song that life was singing in my ears" (538–39). Dreiser's most striking musical metaphor for the artist is the horn, which by checking origi-

nal energy gives it form in a moment of simultaneous ejaculation and birth: "A symphony! And I was the instrument through which all of this was achieving reality for me. It was I . . . who was the horn through which this sweet blast was blown" (534). Unlike sex, artistic creation draws from an inexhaustible reservoir of energy, not just in nature and city but in books and in lectures "suggesting the fullness and richness of life" (557). Absorbing more and more of this richness, Theo, as in his Warsaw public school days, "felt my soul expand."

In section 24 of "Song of Myself," the "I" born with the assertion "I celebrate myself" has expanded to the point where it pronounces its name: "Walt Whitman, a kosmos." In the theater, Theo's imagination lifts him into a "super-cosmic realm" (362), and on his first stay in Chicago he imagines the city as a vast communal self speaking in Whitman's ecstatic voice: "I am the pulsing urge of the universe! You are a part of me, I of you!" (298). Shortly after recounting Theo's epiphanic "I was I," Dreiser interrupts the narrative to tell of a time when he too named his transcendent self. At some unspecified time in the past, Dreiser says, he planted "a Chinese water lily" that was so "twisted and folded" within its labyrinthine bulb that it struggled "in getting its head out." Recognizing his earlier youthful self in the lily, Dreiser had replaced all those "diminutives" of his childhood by pronouncing his manly name in an act of self-appropriation: "That is myself, as I was in my youth . . ., all bent and twisted within myself, my thoughts convolute and interlaced, my head twisted under my arm or leg in some unconscionable way. I will name it Theodore and see what happens" (528).

In Eastern religion and philosophy, this Chinese water lily, undoubtedly the lotus, has cosmic significance. For Buddhists, the lotus represents Nirvana, the peace that follows the extinction of desire. Dreiser was aware of this symbolism, for in proclaiming the eternal reign of Aphrodite, he mocks the very idea of eternal peace: "Dream on, oh Buddha, asleep on your lotus leaf, of an undisturbed Nirvana!" (168). For Hindus the lotus is, among other things, "the procreative power of the eternal substance; the mover on the face of the waters; the self-generative; the self-born, immortal and spiritual nature of man; the unfolding of all possibilities" (Cooper 101–02). Theo's college friend Sutcliffe not only resembles a Buddhist in his "serene and introspective" nature but is also like "a Hindoo seer" (401), and Dreiser clearly intends the lily as something like that Hindu symbol of self-generation and immortality. The lily eventually did unfold as "a really tall and rugged stem," and even though Dreiser was forced to leave it before its full development his "faith was that it would and did bloom" (529). At once an image of birth, artistic fulfillment, erection, and resurrection, this lily, its

roots in the muck and its blossoms in the air, also symbolizes the eternal unity of salamander holes, comets, and everything in between.

Return of the Cat Man

Dreiser's little allegory ends on a discordant note, his "fear" that he has not given the "symbolic lily which is myself" (529) sufficient nurturing. Despite his modest success with women and the stirring of creative energy, by the end of *Dawn* Theo is not yet a "really tall and rugged stem," much less a full blown lily. In the last eight chapters he takes a series of jobs—driving a delivery wagon for two different laundries, collecting for a time-payment furniture company—that expose him to sexual temptations. He at times will "condescend" to an adventure but is always left "quite nauseated" by the "unaesthetic minds" (546), as well as dirty bodies and beds, of the women. When he does get his first real girlfriend, a clerk at the laundry where he works, she is an inexperienced "case of arrested development" who poses no threat. But it is really Theo, the "embryo" (537) intellectual and dreamy would-be artist, whose development is arrested. Skipping over "all intermediate labor," he imagines himself at the "zenith of my days—wealthy, happy, famous, with some radiantly beautiful woman to share my happiness" (539). This fantasy will collapse when he confronts the reality principle in the body of the avenging cat man.

Having lost his job for wrecking his laundry wagon, Theo hires on as a collector for a manufacturer of cheap home furnishings. The circumstances of his hiring point to some sort of Oedipal conflict, for he gets his job because the manager's wife, an old customer on his laundry route, likes him. The fact that she runs a house of assignation points the same way. But the rivalry between Frank Nesbit and the boy is for life itself—and the money that opens the way to pleasure, sexual and otherwise. Nesbit is an "ardent lover of money, and of life," and he strokes the bills Theo hands over with masturbatory pleasure: "[H]e fingered them tenderly, really with a kind of miserly affection, as though he were moved voluptuously to the very core of his being" (571). Theo too is "enamored of a larger measure of existence" (580) and gets a sexual thrill in the same way: "my pocket was always bulging with loose silver and bills, the mere handling of which was an intense satisfaction, and even delight" (582). When Theo withholds twenty-five dollars of Nesbit's money, he underestimates the danger of attacking the manhood of someone "whose voice was as soft as a woman's" and who is himself "somewhat like a woman, and somehow cat-like, too" (571).

Theo takes the money because he thinks a "really good overcoat" (580)

will contain his seething inner forces and offer to the world a representation of his ideal self: "[M]y brain was fairly bubbling with ideas of . . . how I might climb and climb . . . and I could walk unashamed and untroubled into the best theatres, etc., money in my pocket, a sense of real ability and fitness to live enfolding me as a cloak" (581). Wearing one of "those perfect things" he sees hanging in the store windows, he hopes to feel the way he did that day in the seventh grade when he read to May Calvert and she told him he was "perfect." Girls will say, "Isn't he handsome?" and he will be "able to talk" (582).

When Nesbit discovers the theft, he punishes the boy much as Sarah had punished him for his "mischief." He is "shrewd but pacific—quite your Robespierre in some ways. . . . And very gentle and sad he was, too, for he liked me and I liked him" (583). The guillotine is not his chosen instrument, however. Calmly telling Theo that the accounts are "mixed up somewhat," he delivers, "out of a clear sky, a most devastating bolt." Theo's exaggerated response suggests the return of long repressed guilt: "And then the bill itself—and my red, shamed face, my flustered eyes and trembling hands and knees. . . . I lost my voice completely. . . . I flushed, turned white and suffered cold chills up and down my spine. The roots of my hair hurt." We hear in this passage the authorial voice that Donald Pizer finds so appealing in the autobiographies, one that "has both a lyric and an ironic force" (143). The passage begins with lyrical identification, builds until it begins to strain our credulity, and then collapses in bathos with the wildly improbable throbbing hair. Nesbit is no more a demon at heart than Sarah has ever been. Like even the most well meaning adults, he uses "old-wives' tales" merely as handy instruments of control. When, "in the most kindly mood," he says that Theo is "on the straight road to hell" (583) and that dishonesty "will be the finish of you as sure as hell!" (584), he has no idea that he is raising the specter of that long-ago frustrated theft, when the boy reached for the coins on the dead neighbor's eyes and received his "first vivid impression of death" (20).

And he cannot know the effect of sending Theo off with the hope that "I may take you back again" (584) if the theft is not too serious. One of Sarah's "tricks" was to threaten her children with desertion to keep them in line; Nesbit produces the same effect by staying put and sending Theo out the door. Fearing that Nesbit will "call me back or have me arrested," he writes "a most pleading and to me painful letter" asking for time to repay the debt and promising "I would behave myself" (584). His words are now ineffectual, and Nesbit's silence leaves him in the "tortured state" of uncertainty. Although Theo gets another job before long, debts for his mother's

funeral and for the Catholic masses his father has insisted on are "still hanging over us" (584). As a child, Theo had tried to hang a cat, and in some sense, the cat hangs over him yet as his "true youth" and the narrative proper end.[13]

More Day to Dawn

In shaping up *Dawn* for publication, Dreiser gave it a form similar to that of his best fiction. As Donald Pizer explains, Dreiser's novels tend to pursue "a clear central structure" to an apparently logical conclusion "yet to suggest both by authorial commentary and by a powerful symbol within the narrative . . . that life is essentially circular, that it moves in endless repetitive patterns" (25). The central structure of *Dawn* is a series of descents into the labyrinth ending logically with Theo's ascent as a potent individual capable of sublimating his libido into art. This structure is reinforced by complex image patterns and parallel scenes and characters, only a few of which I have discussed. Yet in authorial comments near the book's end Dreiser describes a world where "death, changes of mood, changes in life itself, destroy or alter or sicken all original values so that all, all that is left is distaste, a destroying sickness of the heart and of the flesh!" (577). With the return of the cat man, that powerful symbol of avenging morality, Theo is forced out of one job and into another of "identically the same character" (585), giving the effect of repetition and circularity.

As he had with *Sister Carrie*, Dreiser added a coda that, while again emphasizing the circularity of Theo's life, nonetheless validates his artistic impulses. Adopting the perspective of world-weary and bad-tempered middle age, Dreiser makes the ostensible point that "formal general education . . . merely supplements . . . the natural precepts and creative flares of the sensitive and creative mind" (587); it is just a superficial "polishing process" (586). While he has earlier proclaimed sex to be the "meaning" of it all, he "take[s] no meaning from life other than the picture it presents to the eye" (588), and that picture itself is but a "titillating illusion" (587). He has one word for the pursuit of "ultimate perfection": "Bunk" (589). Dreiser does get his revenge on the cat man, though. Scientists, he writes, are "like cats at mouse-holes" (588) but they are no more capable of solving life's mysteries than "[c]hronically nebulous" (589) Theo. Where is the cause of shame, he implies, when all are equally ineffectual? The coda thus demonstrates the sickening of values, for it denies importance to the very things—formal integrity and knowledge—that have been Theo's goals over the course of 500-plus pages.

Given this sunset mood at the book's end, it might seem unlikely that Dreiser took his title from Thoreau, who ends *Walden* with the exuberant declaration that "There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star" (223). Yet there is reason to think he did.[14] For one thing, his declaration that "the morning of sex was full upon me" immediately follows his account of reading Thoreau and Emerson, among other "flames of literature" (252). Within the coda itself there are stirrings of vitality. Science may have exposed "glorious sunsets" as "accidents of dust" and "all scenery" as "chance," yet there are some "minds," including Dreiser's by implication, that continue to "rejoice" (588) in them. "Morning brings back the heroic ages" (60), Thoreau believes, but it is also a state of mind: "Morning is when I am awake and there is dawn in me" (61). It is perhaps owing to Dreiser's imp of the perverse that Theo emerges from that Indiana cave at sunset to complete the ordeal that will become the "stuff" (408) of his heroic retellings. If life is circular, there is at least the consolation that the end is also the beginning. "Life-hunger was the spirit of me" (161), Dreiser says of his youthful self, and it still is. If now "we stand as ever in the past on the shore of the unknowable," we are yet "looking out with more of a desire for change, a greater heart-hunger for difference than for . . . knowledge" (589). This hunger is the waking of the "All Force" (85), the "eternal unrest" that projects "phantoms" out of itself in order to "entertain itself in diverse ways" (588). The world is Nature's "flare of self expression"; by his own "creative flares" (587) Dreiser becomes the "truly God-like" artist he glorifies in one of the holograph's more optimistic moments. Now, in the last paragraph, as he looks back gloomily at the work containing the "essence" of his own "wondering," he is the creator looking on his own creation. He casually dismisses the whole thing as an "apologia" for his technical deficiencies, but we should not accept this diffidence at face value. The reviewer for *The New Masses* was right. *Dawn* is "a damn fine book" (Hermann 618).

Notes

1. The quotation is from chapter 104 of the holograph, located at Indiana University. Quotations from the manuscript of Dawn are courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, and the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I owe a further debt to Professor Nancy Shawcross and her staff at Penn for allowing me access to

Dreiser's library.

2. This is the view taken by Robert Forrey in "Theodore Dreiser: Oedipus Redivivus," *Modern Fiction Studies* 23 (1977): 341–54. Of the critics who see Sarah as a positive influence on Dreiser's work and life, Lawrence E. Hussman is the most appreciative. See *Dreiser and His Fiction: A Twentieth-Century Quest* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1983) 4–6. For a view of the historical Sarah closer to my reading of her role in *Dawn*, see Lingeman, 1: 29–31. General discussions of Freud's influence on Dreiser are to be found in Moers and Zanine.

3. Dreiser's copy of *Three Contributions* is in the Dreiser Collection at the University of Pennsylvania. It contains a good bit of underlining and a scattering of asterisks and arrows in the margins. It is the second, enlarged edition, dated 1916, translated by Brill, and published by the Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company. Since this edition is not readily available, I am quoting from the Brill translation as it appears in the Modern Library's popular *Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud.* Dreiser's library also contains copies of two other Brill translations: Freud's *Reflections on War and Death*, with only a single passage underlined on the unconscious denial of death, and *Totem and Taboo*, which is unmarked.

4. Dreiser would have found justification in Spencer's "The Nebular Hypothesis" for choosing a comet as an image for the romantic artist, the outsider whose path rarely crosses that of the conformist planets, who all circle the sun on one plane. Comets are loners that have broken free of the "parent mass" (265); they circle the sun in "extremely eccentric orbits" (257), never losing "their different individual motions" (258).

5. In the Modern Library version of the Brill translation, which I have been citing for convenience, the sentence has been modified to read "The highest and lowest in sexuality are everywhere most intimately connected" (572). With its metaphorical "hang," the original version has interesting connections with Dreiser's imagery, as will be apparent in the discussion that follows.

6. In *Three Contributions*, Freud writes that children who witness the sex act will inevitably think it is "a kind of maltreating or overpowering," a misinterpretation that can lead to "a later sadistic displacement of the sexual aim" (596). In Freud's celebrated case study of the "Wolf Man," published in 1918, the year Dreiser met Brill, Freud traces the patient's neurosis back to the sight of dogs copulating, a sight transferred to an infantile memory of his parents in bed, and then later distorted by a series of displacements and condensations into a terrifying castration dream of wolves in a tree staring into his window. There are interesting parallels between this case and Theo, whose sight of the dogs "fighting" has unconscious associations with a scene of sexual discovery and a fantasy of threatening animals in a tree. Extensive excerpts from this case study are to be found in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay 400–26. There is no evidence that Dreiser read this case study, but

there is always the chance that Brill was a conduit. Such speculation runs up against the problem of dating, however. Dreiser finished a manuscript of *Dawn* in 1916, before Freud's case study was published. Whether the extant manuscript represents that state or, as is possible, incorporates later work is an open question.

7. This speculation raises the difficult question of when a childhood memory or dream of a childhood experience takes its significance, at the time of the event or later. In his case study of the "Wolf Man," Freud draws upon his 1899 paper on "Screen Memories," in which he argues that early memories return not because they are in themselves necessarily important but because they have symbolic connections to later experiences that have been repressed. Freud even questions whether actual childhood memories exist at all. The memories "did not, as people are accustomed to say, *emerge*; they were *formed*" (Gay 126). Dreiser makes clear that his earliest memories are "composed more of hearsay and emotion than of . . . reality" (*Dawn* 16). It is possible that we should see early events like the dog "fight" and cat hanging as having significance only because Dreiser brings to it the "emotion" of later experiences, such as the time his sister Amy (as Dreiser calls his sister Sylvia) comes home late to confront her father in a towering rage. When Amy says in outrage, "You'd think we were a lot of dogs and slaves!" he loses control: "You strumpet! . . . I will twist your neck! I'll choke you to death and throw you out in the street where you belong" (230). As John Paul proceeds to choke her and Amy responds in "long, shrill, terrifying shrieks," Theo stands "wide-eyed, frightened, hurt" while the horror "burned itself into my brain" (231). Like an analysand, Dreiser is recovering a past that may never have existed but which seems to have explanatory power for what he has become.

8. Compensation is clearly the basis for the Whitman-like poem Dreiser inserts to celebrate mothers: "And against the fevers and cruelties of desire / I put over the self-immolations of the mothers of the offspring of that desire—/ And I defy you to say that the scales that weigh inequity are not even!" (*Dawn* 367). In other words, mothers suffer for their children in order to punish themselves for the desire that drove them to have the children in the first place.

9. The touch of a sympathetic hand will continue to depress Theo, with the notable exception of his teacher May Calvert, discussed below. When a sympathetic employer lays his hand on Theo's shoulder and tells him he is not to be fired after all, "the touch of sympathy quite upset me" and causes "one of the most depressing" (*Dawn* 354) Christmases of his life. Most telling is his response to a middle-aged woman with "a buccaneering spirit." When she lays "an affectionate hand" (483) on his shoulder in an obvious seduction ploy, he flees in disarray under the force of her "assault" (484).

10. While in the published version Sarah certainly has mood swings, there are no "terrible storms" to speak of. In the holograph, however, when Sarah is feeling

particularly "accursed" by poverty and her children's scandalous behavior she assaults one of Theo's sisters for strutting about in "rag bag finery": "[M]y mother (in desperation no doubt) gave her a sound trouncing—beating her body, pulling her hair and wrestling with her. Result a terrifying and unnecessarily prolonged period of screaming during which my mother was agonized as to what the neighbors would think."

11. Looking and touching, Freud says in the section of *Three Contributions* where he defines fetishism, are "analogous" to one another and are normal components of the sex life. Looking can become a perversion, but a person who does no more than "linger" at this "intermediate sexual aim" can channel libido "to a higher artistic aim" (568). Theo's effort to "linger" at the stage of looking and touching is, like his fetishism, an expression of his artistic temperament.

12. When Theo is about eleven, Paul rescues the family from the depths of poverty in Sullivan, Indiana, and moves them to Evansville. He is "like a fairy godfather" (*Dawn* 113) to Theo, and Dreiser comments that Paul would have been able to "bestride the world like a Colossus" if it weren't for "lack of a little iron" (112) or other element in his makeup. In the holograph, Paul gives Theo a pair of brass-tipped boots, "weapons of offence and defence" that leave him "feeling like a prince's son." To have what Paul has, then, is to possess phallic power, which is probably why Theo wants Paul's lover at the time he is threatened by the loss of his mother. The irony is that Paul is equally a tool of women; his sentimental song about mothers, for example, is "one of those charming and babyish expressions of his inmost self," and it pleases Sarah, Dreiser suspects, because it shows "her emotional control of him" (*Dawn* 467).

13. The conjunction of Nesbit, Sarah, and the Church is one of the book's important condensations. Nesbit's withholding of forgiveness and affection repeats Sarah's withholding of her love to control her children when they do not show enough "contrition," and it repeats the threat by a priest to withhold burial rites because of Sarah's "mortal sin" of dying unshriven: "[H]ow savagely Mother Church would repay by stern denial of her hieratic pomp and meaningless formulas the spiritual lapses which it condemned" (*Dawn* 519). While Theo is "boiling with "poorly-repressed rage," his father wins Sarah a church burial by a "crawling pilgrimage after this priest," "tears and supplication," and a vow to buy masses at the exorbitant going "rate." After a "solemn, artistic, moving" service, Sarah's corpse is placed in a "vault" rather than being buried because the family can not stand her being "put away so completely forever as an earth-grave would have doomed" (521). Sarah has died before Theo can "make up to her in some sympathetic way for my past deficiencies" (508), and so Ligeia becomes Madeline Usher, put living in the tomb but come back to drag her guilt-ridden incestuous lover down to dissolution as Theo's abject terror and vows to "behave" repeat John Paul's

belly-crawling supplications.

14. My thanks go to Thomas P. Riggio not only for his help in exploring the aisled mazes of the Dreiser Collection at Penn but for his pointing out the Thoreau connection in conversation. Another Thoreau echo may be heard in the passage where Dreiser tells how the Warsaw, Indiana, Opera House becomes a Whitman-like "super-cosmic realm" in Theo's imagination. While the "land of illusion" seems to have "no relation to reality," Theo is "like those water plants that reaching down through muck and ooze still find something that is neither muck nor ooze" (*Dawn* 362). Here the lotus merges with the Thoreau who bids us "work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance . . . till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*" (66).

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Reviews

Theodore Dreiser: *Art, Music, and Literature, 1897–1902*, ed. Yoshinobu Hakutani. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001. xxxiv + 298 pp. Cloth, $39.95.

This volume brings together a focused selection, devoted to artistic and cultural themes, from the over 100 magazine and newspaper articles that Dreiser composed during the period leading up to and through the writing of *Sister Carrie*. The material ranges widely from loftier aesthetic pursuits to the inner workings of the pop culture industries and engagingly reveals (despite the occasional puff piece, as for example on the painter of frolicking kittens) the texture both of Dreiser's interests and enthusiasms and of his rapidly evolving cultural milieu. Editor Yoshinobu Hakutani provides a thorough introduction that expertly sketches Dreiser's many activities during this time and his developing sense of literary ambition. Readers might take note, however, of a possible familiarity with some of the material: one-third of the 33 pieces have been reprinted elsewhere, including nine in Hakutani's earlier *Selected Magazine Articles of Theodore Dreiser: Life and Art in the American 1890s* (2 vols., 1985, 1987).

Writing about the higher (or at least more genteel) artistic pursuits, Dreiser can be rather more earnest than excited. While his admiring reportage on women painters and, especially, musicians (though of the pianists he is more skeptical) is commendable, one senses that these assignments did not engage his full attention. Similarly, the "literary visits" in part 3 of the text combine biography and travelogue in a pleasant if unremarkable fashion. A partial exception here is the interview with William Dean Howells, a complimentary portrait that, as Hakutani reminds us, stands in interesting contrast to some of the less flattering remarks that Dreiser made elsewhere about Howells.

Matters become more lively, and Dreiser's own interest intensifies, when he surveys more popular cultural scenes (where, not infrequently, the

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matter of money can be addressed directly) or sites where diverse and contradictory impulses are at work. A fine example of the latter is the article on the Camera Club of New York, a piece that illuminates the fluid boundaries between high and popular culture, and between professionalism and amateurism, which obtained at the turn of the last century. Dreiser details the efforts of Club vice-president Alfred Stieglitz (of whose pathbreaking work Dreiser is very appreciative) and other professional photographers to promote the recognition of photography as a legitimate art form that transcends the simple mechanical registration of an "objective" image. That same Stieglitz might also, however, pop by a club darkroom and assist an utter novice with his first efforts at film developing and encourage the tyro to keep snapping trees and sunsets. The firmer lines of separation that we will see as the century progresses have here yet to solidify.

The discussion of photography as genuine art relates to another key area of cultural innovation that might be characterized as the growth of the modern, technologically mediated *spectacle*—perhaps an unsurprising realm for Dreiser to be drawn toward. Stieglitz (who, along with several of his photos, features prominently in two of the pieces collected here) emphasizes at length the degree of manipulation to which the photographer subjects the image. The resulting picture, after diverse light and chemical treatments, might bear little relation to anything observable with the naked eye, a sign that an artistic intention has reshaped the "natural" scene. A reverse but parallel example of this tendency emerges in the fascinating portrait of William Louis Sonntag, in some ways the high point of the book, which after revision appeared as "W.L.S." in *Twelve Men*. Sonntag was a friend of Dreiser's, and the article was written after Sonntag's death from a malarial fever contracted in Florida—a sudden end to what promised to be a spectacular and highly varied career. A painter, architect, wood craftsman, lapsed aristocrat, critic, and shrewd political observer, Sonntag was an energetic quasi-polymath who strongly elicited Dreiser's sympathy and interest. One project Sonntag becomes intensely excited over is a plan to stage a "lifelike" train wreck using elaborate models and stop action photography, complete with terrified passengers leaping from flaming Pullmans. "A railroad couldn't plan anything more real than mine will be," he boasts. The desire to blur completely the border between the (reproducible and commodifiable) image and an increasingly scare-quoted "reality" manifests itself here quite strikingly.

Other pieces explore the growth of the modern publicity apparatus and the uncertain manifestations of fame. In "Whence the Song," Dreiser cannot resist playing with a naturalistic frame, as he follows the course of a song

and its songwriter from early invisibility to eventual popularity (with the lucky tunesmith now holding court in all the fashionable night spots) to obscurity once more, a fate of the pathetic has-been. A whole cycle of birth, growth, decay, and incipient demise is cleverly deployed. Along the way we learn much about the music business (of which Dreiser's brother Paul Dresser was of course a successful member) and its various methods for promoting and disseminating new songs in the days before recording and radio (many flyers sent around to local glee clubs, for instance). Something of a high—or low—point of this facet of the collection comes in the deceptively-titled "Literary Lions I Have Met," which has nothing to do with literary appreciation and everything to do with the culture industry. It is a portrait of impresario James Burton Pond, whose business was organizing and promoting lecture tours by famous authors of the day. While Dreiser maintains a vague pretence of loftier concerns (noting, for instance, Pond's respect for art and ideas and his warm relations with writers), the real interest of the article—for us and, I think, Dreiser too—is one of cash value: how much was Twain worth? Henry Ward Beecher? Kipling? Pond's "stars" could, it seems, usually be counted on for at least two thousand in receipts per night. And while Wilkie Collins and Matthew Arnold might have been widely respected, they did lousy box office. At all events, it is a peculiar angle on nineteenth-century literary relations, a pre-bestseller list reckoning of public interest.

So it is with some irony that the collection draws to a close with an article on the naturalist and recluse John Burroughs, white bearded and solitary in his mountain cabin. Living on grains and root vegetables and repudiating the "desire for luxuries" as an "error of the mind," Burroughs stands in sharp contrast to the urban bustle and cultural dynamism that Dreiser has described earlier. There is something oddly beguiling, then, to learn that Burroughs's childhood neighbor and friend was Jay Gould, a striking juxtaposition that Dreiser himself pursues at some length in the interview. While Dreiser says the proper things about the serene and wholesome atmosphere of Burroughs's hut, we know in the end that it was precisely the mystery of that "desire for luxury" and of personalities like Gould that spurred Dreiser to his greatest writing.

—Robert Seguin, SUNY College at Brockport

Sinclair Lewis, Rebel from Main Street, by Richard Lingeman. New York: Random House, 2002. xviii + 659 pp. Cloth, $35.00.

Richard Lingeman's biography appears forty-one years after Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis, An American Life* (1961). Schorer's biography was a product of the 1950s, which were conservative in political, social, and sexual matters, vehemently anti-Communist, and dominated in academia by the New Critics, who focused on the literary text and considered the historical context irrelevant or unimportant. Schorer showed little interest in Lewis as realist or satirist or as social or political critic and little understanding for Lewis's struggle with alcoholism and its effects on his work, his friendships, and his marriages. Schorer characterized Dorothy Thompson as his "collaborator" in writing Lewis's biography (xviii), and, indeed, he relied one-sidedly on her accounts as well as those of Lewis's first wife, Grace Hegger, for explaining their failed marriages with Lewis. In the end, Schorer found that Lewis "could tell us little or nothing about the subjective life," that "he had no sense of the tragic nature of human experience," and that "he was incapable, apparently, of either feeling or giving expression to sensuous ecstasy or lyric joy" (813).

Lewis died of a final, massive heart attack in a Roman hospital on January 10, 1951, and Schorer's biography concludes simply with the Italian words on the death certificate: "Paralisi cardiaca," with the English translation: "Paralysis of the heart" (814). For Schorer, however, "paralysis of the heart" was not just a medical term. It also had, as he explained in "The Burdens of Biography" (*Michigan Quarterly Review* [25 Oct. 1962]), "metaphorical significance" as "the very theme of Lewis's life and a major theme of the whole book: his incapacity for love." Moreover, he asks, "[Was] this not poetry? And more than that, magnificently, poetic justice?" (250). Did Schorer mean, Lingeman asked in "Lifting the Schorer Curse: The Burden of a Biography" (*Sinclair Lewis Society Newsletter* [Fall 1997]), "it was poetic justice that Lewis died of cardiac arrest?" It struck Lingeman that it was rather "Schorer's own heart" that "was a bit paralyzed when he wrote that," adding that "[p]erhaps Lewis's heavy smoking and drinking were the mundane cause of his troubled heart" (17).

Equally devastating was Schorer's evaluation of Lewis's literary oeuvre. Schorer imposed on Lewis's literary career a pyramidal scheme (reminiscent of Greek tragedy) of a slow "Climb" (ch. 3) to the great "Success" (ch. 4) of his novels of the 1920s (*Main Street* to *Dodsworth*) and the long "Decline" (ch. 5) and "Fall" (ch. 6) of his novels (*Ann Vickers* to

World So Wide) following Lewis's controversial selection over Dreiser as the first American recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1930. Even Lewis's best novels (*Main Street*, *Babbitt*, *Arrowsmith*, *Elmer Gantry*, and *Dodsworth*) could not satisfy Schorer, who considered them deficient in structure, subtlety, and ambiguity. Indeed, Schorer found it "futile to approach any Lewis novel as a work of art," for "if *Babbitt* [could] not be thus approached, none of the other novels [could] be" (355), and therefore he concluded that Lewis was "one of the worst writers in modern American literature" (813).

In 1993, following publication of Lingeman's two-volume life of Dreiser, *Theodore Dreiser: At the Gates of the City, 1871–1907* (1986) and *Theodore Dreiser: An American Journey, 1908–1945* (1990), James L. W. West III encouraged Lingeman to write a new biography of Lewis, (*SLS Newsletter* [Fall 1997] 17). It was time for another one, and Lewis scholars had been challenging and revising Schorer since the mid-1980s. Among the major contributions of which Lingeman could and would make use were Roger Forseth's pioneering examination of Lewis's chronic alcoholism and literary art (1985), Sally Parry's dissertation on "the darkening vision" of Lewis's novels of the 1930s and 40s (Fordham, 1986) and study of "the changing fictional faces" of his wives (1989), James Hutchisson's *The Rise of Sinclair Lewis, 1920–1930* (1996), Anthony DiRenzo's edition of *The Early Business Stories* (1997), and George Killough's edition of the *Minnesota Diary, 1942–1946* (2000). Lingeman also incorporated new information from such sources as the early correspondence with George Lorimer (*Saturday Evening Post*) and later letters to Marcella Powers, memoirs of Barnaby Conrad (1969), John Hersey (1987), Ida [Kay] Compton (1988), and H. L. Mencken (1993), and the biographies of Dorothy Thompson by Marion K. Sanders (1973) and Peter Kurth (1990).

Unlike Schorer's bland *An American Life*, Lingeman's *Rebel from Main Street* conveys a thematic focus on Lewis as the ever restless, lonely, rebellious, subversive, and satirical writer, who "loved" America but "did not like it" (547) because "it was not good enough," who was "only fully alive" when he was writing (523), and whose "fiction functioned at its highest pitch when galvanized by anger at some banality or stupidity or injustice" (554). Unlike Schorer, Lingeman assesses Lewis's life and work with an open mind, sympathy, sensitivity, and balance. Lewis's relationships with his father (Dr. E. J.), brother (Claude), his older son (Wells), and his wives (Gracie and Dorothy), for example, are portrayed with more balance and insight. Contrary to what Lewis thought, his father and brother were both proud of his literary accomplishments. Gracie's vanity, social climb-

ing, and flirtations and Dorothy's lesbian affairs before and during her marriage with Lewis and her own career as reporter and columnist certainly contributed to their failed marriages. Lewis may have lashed out at clichéd condolences when Wells was killed in action (1944), but he "buried his pain," and "surely there were tears in a dark recess within, like moisture oozing from a wall of a cave" (485). There is no such insight from Schorer (723). Nor does Schorer share with Lingeman an appreciation of the wicked wit of Lewis. When, for example, Lewis taught a creative writing class at the University of Minnesota during the fall of 1942, the director of the honorary writing fraternity, Dr. Anna Augusta von Helmholtz Phelan ("a name [Lewis] might have thought up" [467]), showed Lewis the finger her cat Nikki-poo had scratched, but was not amused by Lewis's suggestion: "Why don't you drown the son of a bitch?" (468). Discussing *Cass Timberlane* (1945), Lingeman comments: "At its best, the writing is sharp and passionate, though the reader should pass over the silly lovers' talk Lewis crafts for Cass . . . and Jinny . . . and ignore the annoying cat named Cleo—he should have drowned the son of a bitch" (488).

Lingeman blends the life and works into an eminently readable narrative, which is uncluttered by the massive detail that Schorer gives in his almost daily account of Lewis's activities, and offers more substantive analysis of individual works, whether major or minor novels, short stories, or plays, than Schorer, who often simply records the positive and negative contemporary criticism. Lingeman's favorite novels are still *Main Street* "for its indelible pictures of small town life" and *Babbitt* "for its satirical vision" (*SLS Newsletter* [Spring 1995] 2). Lingeman considers *Babbitt* to be "Lewis's finest achievement, a seamless blend of realism and satire" (213). Of the early novels, *The Job* (1917) stands out as a work of social realism, registering "with perfect sociological pitch the rise of the female office-worker" (96), and which therefore has been rediscovered by feminist scholars (cf. Maureen Honey's introduction to the Bison edition of *The Job* [Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1994]). "In *Elmer Gantry*, Lewis played," as Lingeman argues, "Paul Revere, attempting to rouse the country against fundamentalist fascism, and seventy-five years later, in a time of errant televangelists and evolution-banning creationists, his charges against Gantry are hardly shocking" (307). For Schorer, the novel was simply "a work of almost pure revulsion" (480) and "half-truth" (481). Of the later novels, Lingeman considers *It Can't Happen Here* (1935), "an incendiary literary document" (406), to be Lewis's "best work of the decade" (430), and *Kingsblood Royal* (1947) , "a Dickensian satire . . . but also social commentary," to be Lewis's "most inflammatory—indeed radical—book" (505).

For Schorer, there was in both novels less "real anger" than "sociological schematization" (760).

For Lingeman, however, Lewis was "a literary sociologist who . . . knew his country better than most writers of his generation" and "measured American life by high standards and found that *it was not good enough*" (553). "Yet who else depicted his country's faults with such coruscatingly funny, ambivalently loving satire?" Lewis "wrote with real moral passion," for "*He really cared*" (554 [cf. Alfred Harcourt's reminiscence in 1951 on p. 518]). That is Lingeman's answer to Schorer's diagnosis of Lewis's "paralysis of the heart." Lingeman has lifted "the Schorer curse" by convincingly demonstrating that we should care about Sinclair Lewis too.

—Frederick Betz, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

News & Notes

The Dreiser Society will sponsor two sessions at the American Literature Association Conference in Cambridge, MA, on May 22–25, 2003. The conference will take place at the Hyatt Regency Cambridge, 575 Memorial Dr., Cambridge, MA. Information about the conference, including lodging, may be found at the ALA web site at http://americanliterature.org.

Among the Dreiser Edition volumes scheduled over the next five years, Tom Riggio reports that *A Traveler at Forty* will appear in 2003.

The Norton Critical Edition of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, edited by Clare Eby, will be published this winter. The excerpts include Dreiser's interview with P. D. Armour, originally published in *Success* magazine.

A Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia, edited by Keith Newlin, will be published in 2003 by Greenwood Publishing. Among the 69 contributors are many members of the Dreiser Society.

Contributors

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